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L E T T E R

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND

THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.

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THE LORD

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A  
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TO THE RIGHT REVEREND

THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON:

CONTAINING

QUERIES, DOUBTS AND DIFFICULTIES, RELATIVE TO A  
VERNACULAR VERSION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

BEING AN

A P P E N D I X

TO A PROSPECTUS OF A NEW TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE,  
FROM A CORRECTED TEXT OF THE ORIGINALS, &c.

BY

THE REVEREND ALEXANDER GEDDES, L.L.D. *n*

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L O N D O N:

PRINTED BY J. DAVIS,

FOR ROBERT FAULDER, NEW BOND-STREET.

M,DCC,LXXXVII.

L E T T E R

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND

THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON

CONVAINING

OF THE MUSEUM AND BISHOPRIC RELATIVE TO A  
VIRGILIAN VERSION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES



A P P E A R S

TO A PROSPECTUS OF A NEW TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY  
FROM A CORRECTED TEXT OF THE ORIGINAL, &c.



THE NEWBOLD ALEXANDER GEDDES, LTD.



L O N D O N

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## L E T T E R, &c.

MY LORD,

WHEN I first sat down to translate the Hebrew Scriptures, I knew I was undertaking a most arduous task; but, I confess, I was not sufficiently aware of all the difficulties that have since occurred. If I had, I should then, perhaps, have prudently declined an enterprize, which I cannot, without pusillanimity, now relinquish.

However, as new obstacles are daily presenting themselves, and doubts and perplexities seem to multiply in proportion as I proceed, I have reduced a part of these into a set of Queries, which I beg leave to lay before your Lordship, as the person in the kingdom the most likely to give me a satisfactory solution of them.

B

The

The first question that naturally offers is, how far the stile and phraseology of our last English Version ought to be adopted or rejected, in a new translation? But to form a just idea of this general question, it will be proper to divide it into different heads.

In the first place, then, I think it will be by all agreed, that such single words or whole phrases, in the old version, as are become entirely obsolete, or are of an ambiguous meaning, or border on plebeian triteness, ought, by a new translator, to be rejected; and others substituted in their place, more agreeable to the present usage, less liable to misconstruction, and further removed from vulgarity. But is the same liberty to be taken with other words and phrases, which, though obsolete in common use, are still intelligible to one acquainted with the Scripture stile, and have in reality nothing in them to debase its dignity?

For example, would you, with some fastidious moderns, reject such words as *ambushment*, *heritage*, *meet*, *wroth*, *banquet*, *banner*, *bereave*, *bewail*, *pourtray*, *discomfit*, *marvel*, *obeisance*, *progenitors*, and a number of similar terms throughout the Bible? Or would you occasionally use them for the sake of variety, energy, or euphony? For my part I am inclined to think, and have elsewhere hinted, that we should not only retain such old words as are still, though rarely used; but even revive many that have gradually gone into disuse; if they be equally analogical, and at the same time more significant and harmonious than those that custom has introduced in their room.



With regard to whole phrases, it is much harder to form a decided opinion. They are generally Hebraisms, which have been gradually incorporated into our language by the different translators of the Bible, from a laudable design of representing, as exactly as possible, the air of the originals; and, though many of them are extremely abhorrent from the English idiom, yet long custom and the sanction of religion have made them familiar to our ear; however indistinctly they may be seized by our understanding—Are such to be retained by a new translator? or mollified and modernized into equivalent terms?

It will possibly be said: “A distinction should be made. Some Hebraisms are so contrary to our modes of phrasing, that they cannot be retained without great obscurity; whilst others, though somewhat uncouth, are yet intelligible, or may be easily made so by a note. The latter should, the former should not be adopted in a vernacular translation.”

But this seems, by far, too vague an answer. What may appear sufficiently clear to one, may seem obscure to another; and in a book, that is read by all, it is not enough that the phrase be intelligible to a few persons only; it should be as generally so as possible. It is granted by the greatest sticklers for verbal translation, that the phraseology of the original ought to be abandoned for absolute perspicuity: why not, then, for a greater degree of it? especially where there is no danger of mistaking the meaning by such a licence—This deserves a more attentive consideration.

I had said in my PROSPECTUS, that there is, in our last national Version, a blameable want of uniformity in the mode of translating. It has been hinted to me, that I ought to have produced instances, which I now do the more willingly, because it gives me an opportunity of discussing the question under consideration, and others connected with it.

When I rank, among the faults of a translation, a want of uniformity in the mode of rendering, I do not mean that a translator is never to diversify his style, or vary his expressions. The contrary I have laid down as one of the qualities of a good translation. But still, that diversity should be regulated by some uniform and consistent principle, from which he should never deviate, without the most cogent reasons.

There are many words, as well as sentences, in the Bible, which admit, and often require a different rendering; because they have a different meaning in the original. But there are, likewise, many words and sentences, that either always, or at least in similar circumstances, have the same precise meaning; and, consequently, should always be rendered in the same, or nearly the same terms; and this only is the uniformity which I contend for. I will now give examples, both of words and sentences, in which this uniformity has not been observed by our last translators.

First, of words—And, here, I make not much account of such variations as may possibly be deemed synonymous. He would be a superci-



supercilious critick, I think, who should blame our translators for using indiscriminately *branch* or *bough*; *fountain* or *spring*; *bird* or *fowl*; *faint* or *weary*; *dwelling-place* or *habitation*; *wrathful* or *furious*; *pot*, *pan* or *cauldron*; *tent*, *tabernacle* or *pavilion*; *vale*, *valley* or *dale*; *target*, *shield* or *buckler*; *mitre*, *hood* or *diadem*; *maid*, *maiden*, *damsel* or *young-woman*; to *beat-down*, *break-down*, *throw-down*, *destroy* or *overthrow*; to *pluck-up*, *pluck-out*, *root-up* or *root-out*; to *wail*, to *mourn* or to *lament*, &c. Although, perhaps, strictly speaking, it would be better to make some appropriate distinction in the use of almost every one of these and such terms.\* But when we find לֵּי rendered in one place a *lintel*, in another a *post*; אֲרֵבָה now a *locust*, and now a *grass-hopper*; לְעֵנָב *wormwood* and *hemlock*; קִמְוֹשׁ  
nettles

\* The copiousness of a language is somewhat like a superabundance of wealth; there are few who know how to make a good use of either; and he only who is blest with superlative taste and judgment will be kept, in both cases, from manifold abuses. To such a degree has the Lexicon of our language been gradually enriched, that it is often more difficult to select terms, than to find them; and a proper choice is one of the principal characters of good writing. For this the Greek authors are peculiarly remarkable. Although the storehouse from which they drew was inexhaustible, yet they seldom drew from it at random. Almost every term, in their best compositions, has a discriminating character, which is very rarely confounded with any other, however approximating. But, in Greece, no one wrote, who had not made a long and laborious study of the Greek tongue; whereas, in England, almost every one is a writer; and almost every one gives a currency to some new impropriety. Since your Lordship's little book appeared, and since Johnson wrote his Dictionary, grammatical precision has been more generally aimed at, than before; but not much attention, I fear, has been given to the sort of propriety, of which I am speaking; although that, with a little more variety and harmony in the arrangement of sentences, and a more rational application of our indeclinable particles, is all that our language seems to want of the perfection, of which it is susceptible.

*nettles* and *thorns*; ראש *hemlock* and *gall*; יענה an *owl* and an *ostrich*; שש *linen* and *filk*; קאת the *cormorant* and the *pelican*; שאל *hell* and the *grave*, &c. we cannot possibly but disapprove of such incongruity in rendering; and point it out as a fault to be studiously guarded against by every translator.

All this appears to be indisputable. But there are words, in the rendering of which, our translators took a latitude, which, though it is by no means so exceptionable as the former, seems yet to have a certain want of uniformity in it, that in some measure misrepresents the text; and may actually mislead the reader. For what reader would imagine that *law*, *statute*, *decree*, *ordinance* were all terms so perfectly synonymous, as to be expressed by one Hebrew word? Yet חק is found rendered by all those terms. A *coat of mail*, a *habergeon*, a *breast-plate* and a *brigandine* all imply a piece of defensive armour of much the same nature; yet I hardly think that any one would expect to see them all represented in the Original by the single word שרין. Will it appear any more likely that מצר or מצודה is translated with equal propriety, a *fort*, a *hold*, a *strong hold*, a *castle*, a *bulwark*, a *munition*? The three first are more general terms, and may denote any *strong place*, whether so by nature or art; but the three last give us the idea of manual fortification. In all such cases it would, in my apprehension, be more proper to stick to one term, which term should be the most distinctive and expressive that could be found.

We



We should not, perhaps, even approve of translating the same Hebrew words by different English ones, though of nearly the same import; when these, in common acceptation, have at least a sensible difference of meaning in magnitude, intensity, degree or relation. Can a *flood*, a *river*, and a *brook* be equally proper renderings of יָאֵר? or a *town* and a *village* of בֵּית? vessels, furniture, stuff, instruments, weapons, armour, artillery of כֵּל? \* a *castle* and a *palace* of מִצְדָּה? coal and *hot coal* of גַּחֲלִים? concubine and *paramour* of פִּלְגֶּשֶׁת? nephew and *grandson* of נֶכֶד? *inchanters*, *observers of times* and *sooth-sayers* of עֹנֵנִים? Those who wish to see more of this diversity, may consult Taylor's Concordance under the words פָּנָה. פָּה. עָלָם. עָלָה. יִתֵּן. נֶפֶשׁ. יִכָּף. יוֹם. שׁוּב. קִרָּא. קוֹם. קוֹל.

Nay further, I am not sure but we should uniformly translate the same Hebrew word by the same English word; unless the former have a multifarious meaning; or perspicuity or embellishment require to vary the latter. If *tabret* be a good rendering of תֶּבֶל why translate it also *timbrel*? What need is there for translating כִּימָה in one place the *Pleiades*, and in another the *seven stars*? Why is שָׁמַיִם sometimes rendered *heaven*, sometimes *the heaven*, some-

\* To shew how little attentive our translators were to uniformity in rendering the same word even in the very same construction and sense, I shall here give a remarkable instance. Exod. xxx. ver. 27, 28. We have the word כֵּל three times translated "his vessels:" yet in the very next chapter, ver. 8, 9. we find the same word, not only in the same construction, but relatively to the same things, rendered three times "his furniture." One can hardly suppose that these two chapters were translated by the same person.

times

times *the heavens*, and sometimes *the air*? Why גוים—*nations*, *gentiles* and *heathen*? Why אמה a *maid*, a *bond-woman*, a *bond-maid*, a *band-maid*, a *maid-servant*? Why תבנית a *pattern*, a *figure*, a *likeness*, a *form*, a *similitude*? Why נרע to *die*, to *perish*, to *give* and *yield up the ghost*? Why חשה to *be silent*, to *keep silence*, to *hold one's peace*, to *hold one's tongue*? Any of these respective terms, well-chosen at first, would surely be more uniform, and for the most part more proper.

What has been said with regard to the inconsistency and incongruity of rendering the same Hebrew word, in the same circumstances, by different vernacular terms; is equally applicable to the rendering of different Hebrew words by the same term. If I have once used the word *tabernacle* to express מושכן and *tent* to express אהל; I will uniformly do so throughout—nor will I confound either with בית. It is hardly possible that אכל. בוז. חתך. טרף. לקח. and שלל can all be equally well translated by one word “*prey*.” In fact, most of the Hebrew terms have peculiar ideas annexed to them, that require a diversity in rendering them.\*

It often happens, indeed, that this diversity cannot be attained, because the language into which we translate has not such a number

\* The want of this distinction has made our translators put in the mouth of Cain, what he could not say, nor mean—“Behold thou drivest me this day from the face of the earth!” Q. Whither then was he driven? Was not the land of Nod on the face of the earth? The word is ארצה not ארץ and means the spot he was then on; ארצה נוד, as S. Chrysostome well expresses it.



of discriminating terms as would be necessary to express it (not to mention that the etymon of the original word is often dubious, and the distinction sometimes, perhaps, imaginary); but then as far as its terms go, they are to be employed, and appropriated, as nearly as possible, to the ideas meant to be conveyed by them. See some very sensible observations on this subject in Pilkington's Remarks, Sect. xxv.

Diversity in rendering whole sentences, or parts of sentences, is not less common with our translators, than in rendering single words; and is frequently less excusable. This is, no doubt, that "want of identity of phrasing" which the prefacers, in some sort, apologize for; and which is chiefly observable in their translation of Hebraisms; which are the principal object of our present discussion.

Now in rendering these, they seem to have been guided by no uniform principle, nor even by any rules of grammatical analogy: for they have not only observed no uniformity in rendering similar sentences, but have often admitted a strange variety in rendering the same sentences. *To lift up one's feet* for "*to remove*" is certainly not a more harsh idiotism than *to lift up one's eyes* for "*to look up*." Nay the word *lift*, in strict propriety, is more literally applicable to the feet than to the eyes: yet our translators every where retain the last Hebraism; never the first. I am aware it will be said, that the first seems more uncouth to our ears than the last; but I am persuaded it was not more uncouth, when the last was first adopted; and that if

they had also adopted the first, it would now be as familiar to us as the other.\* But the Latin version seems to have determined them; which has *elevavit oculos*, but not *elevavit pedes*. Yet the Greek has retained the last Hebraism: Genesis xxix. 1. *Και ἐξῆρας Ιακώβ τὰς πόδας.*

In like manner, "to deliver one's self from the eyes of another" for "to escape from one," is not more abhorrent from our idiom than "to hide one's eyes from another" for "to connive at him:" yet in the former case, our translators rejected the Hebraism. 2 Sam. xx. 6. but retained it in the latter. Levit. xx. 4.

To do what is *good* in one's eyes, is a Hebraism which our translators have generally rendered by, doing what *pleaseth* or *liketh* one. Thus Gen. xvi. 6. "Behold thy maid is in thy hand; do to her "as it pleaseth thee." And Esther viii. 8. "Write ye also to the "Jews, as it liketh you." But in a phrase exactly similar, Jud. xvii. 6. they translate, "Every one did that which was right in "his own eyes." Again, Gen. xli. 37. "And the thing was good "in the eyes of Pharaoh." But Num. xi. 10. they have not translated "It was also evil in the eyes of Moses," but "Moses was also "displeased."

\* It is observable that the most of our former translators retained the Hebraism: "Jacob lyfte up hys fete and wente, &c." Tyndal—And so Matthews, Cranmer—Bish. Gen. and even Purver. Luther too has "her hub Jacob seine fuesse auff"—And the Dutch "hief Jacob sijne voeten op." Diodati, with his usual elegance, gave the phrase another term, but still renders the word רגל by feet "Se messe in camino a "piedi." The Genevans translated as we do. "Se mit en chemin."



But there are no phrases, in the rendering of which they have shewn more variety than in those of which the words **בן** and **איש** make a part. The first of these, which primarily signifies a *son*, and secondarily a descendant of any kind; has, in the oriental dialects, a much wider acceptation; and is applied not only to the offspring of the brute creation, but also to productions of every sort; and what is still more catachrestical, even to consequential or concomitant relations: So that an *arrow* is called *the son of the bow*; *the morning star*, *the son of the morning*; *threshed-out corn*, *the son of the floor*; and *anointed persons*, the sons of oil.

Now our translators have, in rendering such phrases, for the most part softened the Hebraism; but after no uniform manner. *Sons of Belial* **בני בליעל** is surely not more intelligible to an English reader than *Sons of oil*; and much less so than *Sons of valour*, *sons of righteousness*, *sons of iniquity*; yet, while they retain the first Hebraism with all its original harshness, and partly in its original form; \* they mollify the three last into *valiant men*, *righteous men*, *wicked men*.

\* Even here they are not consistent. For if once they admitted the word *Belial*, they should have retained it throughout; and said *a thing of Belial*, *a heart of Belial*, *a witness of Belial*, *the floods of Belial*: which, however, they render *an evil disease*, *a wicked heart*, *an ungodly witness*, *the floods of ungodliness*. Nay they have, once or twice, translated **איש בליעל** and **אדם בליעל** *a wicked man*. At any rate, if such phrases were not good English in the Old Testament; how came they to adopt them in the New? For there we meet with "The child of hell, the children of light, the children of wrath, the son of perdition, &c."

The same inconsistency holds with regard to *יָמָיו* in a similar construction. If they could, without hurting the English idiom, translate *a man of war, a man of understanding, a man of sorrows, a man of strife, a man of wicked devices, the man of thy right hand*; why not also *a man of peace, a man of truth, a man of violence, a man of iniquity*?

Not only in similar phrases, did our translators break the rules of uniformity; they often violated them in rendering the same phrase, and that, sometimes, in the same chapter. "How old art thou?" says Pharoah to Jacob, Gen. xlvii. 8. instead of "How many are the days of thy years?" But in Jacob's answer, verse 9. "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are &c." In ver. 28. they again drop the Hebraism, and translate "so the whole age of Jacob;" for "all the days of the years of Jacob."

*To be in one's hand*, is a Hebraism that often signifies *to be in one's power*, and so our translators rendered it, Job i. 12. "All that he hath is in thy power:" but Gen. xvi. 6, they retain the Hebraism, "Behold thy maid is in thy hand."

*To lift up one's hand* is *to swear*; and so we find it rendered, Exod. vi. 8. "Which I did swear to give." Num. xiv. 30. "Which I swore to make you dwell therein." Nehem. ix. 15. "Which thou hadst sworn to give them." But Gen. xiv. 22. "I have lift up my hand to the Lord"—and Deuter. xxxii. 40. "I lift  
" up



"up my hand to Heaven." And Ezek. xx. 5. "In the day when  
"I chose Israel, and lifted up mine hand unto the seed of the house  
"of Jacob." Many more such instances may be found under the  
word יָד. \*

The same variety appears in the rendering of מִלְחָמָה *a man of war*. Thus Exod. xv. 3. "The Lord is a man of war:" but Psalm xxiv. 8. "The Lord mighty in battle." Again, Num. xxxi. 49. "Thy servants have taken the sum of the men of war:" but in the same chapter, ver. 27. "Them that took the war upon  
"them." The LXX. generally rendered the words by πολεμιστης; and our translators have used *warrior* and *warriors* in the same sense, on similar occasions. 1 Kings xii. 21. "Fourscore thousand men  
"which were warriors" עֲשֵׂה מִלְחָמָה; which 2 Chron. xxvi. 11. they render "fighting men."

"To be *wise* or *right* in one's own eyes," is a Hebraism perfectly  
"intelligible in any other language, and is in ours not unfrequently  
used in common speech. Yet, even in rendering this phrase, our  
translators varied. Thus Prov. xiii. 7. "Be not wise in thine own  
"eyes." Prov. xii. 15. "The way of a fool is right in his own  
"eyes." But Prov. xxvi. 5. "Answer not a fool according to his folly,  
"lest he be wise in his own conceit." And xxviii. 11. "The rich  
"man is wise in his own conceit."

\* What makes a deviation from the Hebraism here more necessary is, because "to lift  
"up one's hand" signifies also *to rebel*, and sometimes to *chastise*.

In Exod. iv. 15. they translate רשמת את הדברים בפיו, "Thou shalt put words in his mouth." But Ezra viii. 17. they render ואשמיה בפיהם דברים לדבר, "I told them what they should say." Should not the Hebraism have been retained in both places; or in neither?

In Numb. viii. 7. העבירו תער על כל בשרם are rendered, equivalently "Let them shave all their flesh;" but Ezek. v. 1. the Hebraism is retained; "Let a razor pass on thy head."

In fine, our translators appear to have, not seldom, changed the Hebraism, without necessity, and when it is equally plain, and as good English as the substituted phrase. "Come ye after me" is as intelligible as "follow me"—"To cut off the ends or extremities of a country" is as intelligible, and it should seem less vulgar than "to cut a country short." See 2 Kings vi. 19. and x. 23. So Prov. iv. 26. "Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established." The Hebraism of the last part of this sentence, "and all thy ways shall be ordered aright," which is the marginal rendering, is no less clear and expressive than what has been adopted in its stead. Again, Prov. vi. 16. "Six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination to him." I mistake if it would not have been better to retain the Hebraism; "Yea, seven are the abomination of his soul." Prov. xxvi. 20. - the Hebrew has, "Without wood the fire goeth out," which our translators, with the help



help of Italics, paraphrase thus: "Where no wood *is*, *there* the fire "goeth out," which, compared with the other, appears languid and drawling. Psalm xci. 16. "With long life will I satisfy him." The Hebraism, "with length of days, &c," seems not only as clear, but more energetic and poetical.

Enough has been said to shew, that our translators were not guided by any uniform rule in rendering the Hebraisms of the Bible.—But are there then no rules to be guided by? No fixt and certain boundaries to be prescribed to a translator? Or may he, at random and in an arbitrary manner, either follow the Hebraism, or abandon it? I scarcely think, that this will be allowed by any rational Philologist. I will, therefore, venture to lay down some general Canons, by which I myself have been directed; and of which I wish to obtain your Lordship's and the public's approbation.

## I C A N O N.

All Hebraisms that are sufficiently clear to exclude ambiguity; and either were from the beginning, or are become by long usage, intelligible to every class of readers; and, at the same time, have nothing in them that offends against the laws of grammar and good writing, should universally be retained: but those that are obscure, equivocal, uncouth and ungrammatical should as universally be rejected.

## II CANON.

## II C A N O N.

In rendering the poetical and sentential parts of Scripture, bolder Hebraisms are allowable, than in the historical and legislative parts.

## III C A N O N.

Whatever Hebraism has been once adopted, or Anglicism substituted, should, in the same sort of stile, and in circumstances exactly similar, be uniformly and universally retained.

As to the particular application of these canons, it must, I fear, be left to the judgment and taste of the translator. For whatever lights he may borrow from the observations of others, still it must ultimately rest with himself, how far he is to be directed by them; or on what occasions he is to prefer them to his own.

Another question, starting out of the former, is; Should the Hebraisms, that are not admitted into the text, be retained, at least, in the margin?

Bishop Newcome is decidedly of opinion that they should; and has, accordingly, crowded the margin of his Version of the minor Prophets with more Hebraisms than are even in our common translation. His reason is: "That the genius of the original language will, by that means, be shewn; and the reader unskilled in them will be best enabled to interpret for himself." Your Lordship seems to be of a different opinion, if we may judge from



from your Ifaiah; and I find that many learned perfons, whom I have occafionally confulted on the point, agree with you.

Indeed, I can fee little advantage, that either the learned or unlearned can derive from fuch marginal renderings. Thofe who are fkilld in the languages have no need of them; and thofe who are unskilled can only view them as fo many ftrange modes of expreffion; which muft give them no favourable idea of the oriental ftile. This, I know it from experience, is the idea which the common people entertain of them. They look upon them as fo many obftacles on the way fide, that retard their journey; and they generally prefer Bibles that have them not. To what purpofe then perplex them with fo unneceffary an adjunct; which, at every other verfe, draws their attention from a clear *Text* to an obfcure Comment? For in that light every thing in the margin is by them confidered.

The fole clafs of readers, to whom they can be of any fervice, is that of Biblical Students, who wifh to make the Englifh tranflation a fort of guide to the grammatical knowledge of the originals, without the trouble of learning Hebrew Grammar. But thefe, I prefume, are few in number, and have, befides, if they underftand Latin, a much better director in Arias Montanus.

There are only two cafes, in which I would admit marginal renderings. The firft is, when the tranflator doubts whether he have given the true meaning of the original in the text. Then he is not

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only

only sufficiently authorized, but obliged, I think, in justice, to give either a different English rendering of equal probability, or a literal version of the Hebraism. The second is, when the meaning or force of the text cannot well be perceived without the interpretation of some proper name or emblematical term; in which case, if the English interpretation be admitted into the text, the Hebrew word should be referred to in the margin; and so *vice versa*. Though perhaps it would be still better to include the rejected term in a parenthesis, immediately after the admitted one.

I come now to another question. Beside such idiotisms as I have already mentioned, there is in every language a number of expletive and redundant words, which originating in colloquial dialect, nowhere grammatical, too often retain their place in the most refined and cultivated languages; the first writers not daring to lay them aside, and their example giving them a sanction among those who write after them. How many such are there not in English, which we have not yet had the courage to explode?

In translating a Greek or Latin work into any modern language, or a work of one modern language into another, we never think it necessary to express those idiomatical redundancies; nay, for the honour of our author, we avoid expressing them as much as possible. But a different procedure has generally been observed with regard to the Hebrew Scriptures. Not only to deviate from their meaning; but, likewise, from their form, construction, anomalies, tautologies, ellipses,



fises, pleonafms, enallagès, hypallagés—nay, from the very blunders of their various transcribers, was long accounted a kind of audacious sacrilege.

Hence, no doubt, it is that so many of them have been retained in most modern translations; in direct opposition to grammar and logic; and often to the great detriment of the text, and obscurity of the version. This unjust and ill-grounded prejudice is, among the learned, no more a predominant one: and the translator of the Bible, if he be but a faithful interpreter, may now, without the imputation of impiety, follow that mode of translation which he most approves of; and which is the most likely to convey to the reader the genuine spirit, not the bare and barren letter, of his originals.

Under the shelter of this privilege, may I here presume to point out such Hebrew expletives and pleonafms, as I think may be, with advantage, suppressed in an English translation.

In the first place, the copulative *ו* which admits, and has in every translation received, a great number of various acceptations\*, might frequently with great propriety be omitted altogether; and has often been omitted by the best interpreters, both ancient and modern.

D 2

I would

\* It is indeed the general link of sentences; and serves not only for all those particles which we call conjunctions; but also for many adverbs and prepositions, and even pronouns. Noldius gives it above seventy different meanings: but his distinctions are often nice; and I think they are all reducible to the following thirty: *And, or, nor, nay, with, so, also, thus, if, although, because, that, for, but, yet, since, indeed, who,*

I would, also, extend this licence to the same letter in combination with וְיָ; though here again I have the misfortune to have the whole weight of Bishop Newcome's authority in the opposite scale.

*who, when, then, now, afterwards, again, whilst, meanwhile, therefore, wherefore, namely, nevertheless, moreover.* Of these the most generally used, and perhaps the only necessary, are *and, again, when, for, but, that, if, although, with.* This last is, in reality, no less a copulative than *and*; and a more general use of it would give perspicuity, energy and precision to many passages of Holy Writ, which from the constant use of *and* and *and*, are amphibologous, languid, indiscriminate and ungrammatical. We have a remarkable instance in the three first verses of Genesis. In these, three distinct ideas are presented—The original creation of our material world—its chaotic primordial state—and the important change that took place at the period of the six days creation. It is, moreover, evident from the form and arrangement of the Hebrew words, that such a distinction was meant by the writer. For הָשָׁךְ being without a verb, and רוּחַ being joined to a participle, are naturally and strictly connected with what immediately goes before; but with what follows only by contrast. It is therefore impossible that the וְ can be equally well rendered by “and,” through the whole of the three verses. Let us see: “In the beginning God created the Heavens AND the “earth, AND the earth was without form AND void, AND darkness was upon the face “of the deep, AND the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters: AND God said, “Let there be light, AND there was light.” How heavy, how monotonous, how like to the tale of a peasant is this narrative! But to do justice to the author of the Pentateuch, who, as Longinus says, was certainly no mean writer, let us combine the above passage as sense and construction point out; and the three forementioned distinct ideas will immediately appear conspicuous. In the beginning God created (or had created) the Heavens AND the earth. The earth was YET a dismal waste, WITH darkness on the face of the deep; AND a mighty wind (see p. 49,) moving upon the surface of the waters: WHEN God said, “Let there be light;” AND light there was. Here there are only two common variations in rendering, and no need of an italic supplement to connect the sense; and yet—But I shall leave the intelligent reader to make the comparison of these two modes of translating; and only observe that the first variation of the copulative is justified by the Greek translation, and by the Vulgate *et de terra*—*Terra AUTEM*: and that the connection of רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים with what precedes is implied by their employing the imperfect time *ἐφεύετο*—*ferebatur*.

He



He thinks your Lordship's translation of Isaiah xxxviii. 1. defective; because you have omitted "Now it came to pass." But if one were to ask his Lordship, whether he think that the Prophet, if he had written in English, would have expressed himself in that manner? I am persuaded he would answer in the negative. If so, it is then evidently a Hebrew pleonasm, that should not be rendered in English. At any rate, it should not be rendered, "Now it came to pass," which never could have entered into the head of an English translator, but for the Greek *εγενετο* and the Latin *factum est*. If it were at all to be translated, in the passage above mentioned and other similar passages, why not "It was (or it happened) in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, that &c."

With regard to the word **לאמר** for the omission of which your Lordship is also blamed, in the same passage (Pref. to the Minor Prophets, p. xix.) I think it may be sometimes translated with propriety; and sometimes left untranslated. When the word **וכר** precedes, I would for the most part translate it; but when it is preceded by **אמר** I would not translate it; unless that **אמר** could be conveniently rendered *spoke*, and not *said*.\* There is only one case that, to me, presents a difficulty. It is, when **לאמר** follows a message.

\* The second **לאמר** was sometimes neglected even by the Oriental translators, though, in their dialects, it was idiomatical. Thus SYRIAC, Joshua i. 1. renders the Hebr. **ויאמר יהוה לאמר** by only **אמר מריא**; and so in other places—The Greeks

sage. "It was told him, *saying*—word was brought to him, *saying*." Here the rules of English Grammar are manifestly violated; and yet I cannot see how they can be adhered to, without deviating from the stile and manner of the originals, and almost always diminishing their simplicity. Should we, for the sake of Grammar, even at these risks, adopt the indirect mode of expressing the message, instead of the direct? Or should we say, "This word, this message was brought to David?" Or, in fine, should we retain the present version, ungrammatical as it is, as being the least of the three evils?

The words *לו*. *לך*. *לי* and their respective plurals are also mere expletives, that may be frequently omitted in a translation, to which they are not only not necessary, but often give a vulgar air. "Build me an altar—Get thee up—Take to thee a wife—Come curse me Jacob—Assemble me the men of Judah—Take thou also unto thee—Jacob took to him rods of green poplar." In these and all such phrases the pronoun, it should seem, would be better omitted. Nay, our translators themselves have sometimes

Greeks and Jerom made the repetition less disgusting by varying their words—*ἔειπεν*, *locutus est, dicens*. In which they have been generally imitated by modern translators: and this accords perfectly with the exceptional distinction I have made; for "he spoke, saying;" or "he spoke, and said" has no air of tautology any more than *דבר לאמר*—It is remarkable that, although this phrase is frequent in the Hebrew writings, we never find *אמר לדבר*.

omitted



omitted it, as Ezek. xii. 5. "Dig thou" for "dig thou thee;" and verse 7. "I digged" instead of "I digged me." \*

The personal pronouns *אני* and *היא* seem redundant in such phrases as these: "The woman, whom thou gavest to be with me, *she* gave me of the tree—And Debora, a Prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, *she* judged Israel at that time—Now Hannah, *she* spoke in her heart—But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, *them* will I bring in—Your carcases, *they* shall fall in this wilderness." I am well aware that this has been called an emphatical mode of expression; and, in some instances, accounted a particular beauty; as when the people exclaim, 1 Kings xviii. 39. "The Lord, *he* is the God; The Lord, *he* is the God." Be it so; yet, even here it has all the air of vulgar tautology; and brings to one's mind the old song: "Bell, *she* is my darling, &c." Were it at all deemed necessary to translate the redundant word for the sake of emphasis, I should prefer giving it another turn, and say, "That woman, &c. The Prophetess Debora, &c.—Those little ones, &c. —Jehovah himself, &c."—Although, in general, it would, per-

\* We should laugh at a translator who should thus literally render: *Quid tibi vis? Scire ubi nunc sit tua tibi Daphnis?* or the French *Je m'en vais—battez—moi cet homme-la va-t-en, il s'en est allé.* Yet the personal pronouns are not less redundant in the above Hebrew phrases, than in any of these.

haps, be more agreeable to the simplicity of the Scripture-style to leave the pronoun untranslated.\*

*Hoc quoque, Tiresia, præter narrata, petenti*

*Responde*——

A similar redundancy is frequent in the pronominal suffixes ו and ה; הם and הן; especially in combination with the inseparable prepositions כ and מ—"I know *him* that he will command his children —the land which I will give you to inherit *it*—But of the tree of "the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of *it*. "These are the nations, which the Lord left to prove Israel by *them*."† In many instances our translators disregarded such expletives; thus Numb. xxxv. 34. instead of "Defile not therefore the land which "ye shall inhabit, which I dwell in *it*;" they judiciously render "wherein I dwell:" and I can see no good reason why they did not extend the same licence to all similar cases.

It likewise appears to me, that it would often be proper to omit translating the relative אשר, especially when it cannot be rendered

\* Our translators did not always render it. Thus Exod. iv. 14. we have, "I know that he can speak well;" which in the original is, "I know that he can speak well, *he*," corresponding exactly with the French vulgarism, "Je vous le dis, moi—"il se tait, lui."

† The French have a similar pleonasm. *La victoire* qu'il tient déjà, un coup de fabre est sur le point de *la* lui ravir. The victory, which he already grasps, the stroke of a fabre is on the point of snatching *it* from him. And some of our modern refiners have shewn a strange inclination to ape this ungrammatical mode of expression.

"without



without an italic supplement. A striking example occurs in the very first chapter of Genesis, v. 7. "God made the firmament, and "divided the waters which *were* under the firmament, from the "waters which *were* above the firmament." This is in reality a contradiction; for if the waters were already above the firmament, what need to divide them from those that were below? Other translators have, with nearly equal impropriety, supplied the word *are*; for how could the waters above, which God at the creation separated by the atmosphere from those below, be the waters that are now separated by that same atmosphere? But if we translate simply and indefinitely, "the waters above the firmament from the waters below the firmament;" all will be clear and consistent.

The word *איש*, *man*, is often a mere expletive, not only in Hebrew, but also in Greek;\* and as such our translators sometimes considered it. Exod. ii. 11. "He spied (a man) an Egyptian "smiting (a man) a Hebrew:" and v. 14. "Who made thee "(a man) a prince and a judge over us?" Judges vi. 8. "The "Lord sent (a man) a prophet:" xx. 4. And (the man) "the "Levite."† Why did they not use the same freedom, Gen. xlii. 30. where they render *איש אדני ארץ* "The man who is the

\* *Μανδω* *ανρ.* Demost. and in the New Testament *ανδρες ανδρες*, *ανδρες στρατοι*, &c.

† In Jeremiah xxxviii. 7. they give it another term, and translate *איש כרים* one of the Eunuchs.

"Lord of the land," at the expence of introducing two words that are not in the text\*: and again v. 33. "The man, the Lord of the country." I need not remark that אשה, *a woman*, is often in the same predicament. See 2 Sam. xv. 16. 1 Kings iii. 16. Jerem. iii. 3.

What I have said of איש is applicable to בן: "The sons of the prophets," and "the prophets" are the same thing; as in Greek *οἱ Ἀχαιοὶ* and *παῖδες ἰατρῶν* signify only "the Greeks" and "the Physicians:" and here a question might be made, whether it would not conduce to perspicuity, and prevent misapprehension, every where to render בני, except when it denotes the immediate progeny, by the gentile, or patronymic, of the proper name that follows? So that, instead of saying "the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, the children of Moab, Amalek, Ammon, &c." we should say, "the Reubenites, Gadites, Moabites, Amalekites, Ammonites, &c." Here, too, our translators have set the example; though, as I have already said, without any sort of uniformity. Joel iii. 6. "The children of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem, have ye sold unto the Grecians." The Hebrew has "to the children of the Greeks." So Judges xix. 16. "Benjamites (it should be Benjaminites) for sons of Jemini." 1 Chron. xxiii. 27. "Levites" for "sons of Levi." 2 Chron. xxvii. 5. "Ammonites" for "children of Ammon." Ezek. xxiii. 15. "Babylonians" for "children of Babylon."

\* According to their scrupulous system, "who is" should have been in Italics.



“nians” for “children of Babylon;” and even “men” for “sons of man or Adam.” Psalm lxxxix. 47.\*

This licence should, I think, be extended to proper names, when these signify a whole tribe or people. This has been sometimes done by our translators, but not nearly so often as it should seem expedient. A man of ordinary comprehension, on reading these words, “Judah went with Simeon his brother—Judah took Gaza—The Lord was with Judah; and he drove out the Canaanites—The Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian—Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: I remember what Amalek did to Israel; how he laid wait for him in the way”—might naturally enough imagine that so many different individuals were here designed. Would it not be better, therefore, to translate Amalekites, Midianites, Simeonites, Judaites? or, if in the two last instances the terms may seem uncouth, supply in Italics the word tribe? Nor would I make the same exception here in favour of *ישראל* itself, that I just now made in favour of *בני ישראל*; but I would render it “Israelites” when I saw occasion; or supply the word children.†

## E 2

## The

\* I should, however, I know not well for what reason, be inclined to make one exception: I would still say, the children of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, and above all, “the children of Israel.” It is a kind of national distinction of the posterity of those three patriarchs, and is so often repeated and so universally understood, that no ambiguity can easily arise from it.

† What has been said in this and the preceding section is to be understood chiefly of the prose parts of the Bible. In poetry, a different mode of rendering should generally

The word פָּנִים or פָּנִי is, likewise, sometimes pleonastic, though not so frequently, I suspect, as some Grammarians would have it to be. I see no reason for suppressing it in such phrases as these: "Darkness *was* upon the face of the deep—There went up a mist from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground—and behold the face of the ground was dry." We daily use the word *face* in much bolder and far less analogical metaphors, and in reality, פָּנִים signifies the external appearance of any thing. It is true, however, that the word cannot, in many places, be rendered literally; or should not, perhaps, be rendered at all: and in this the translator must be guided by grammatical analogy and idiomatical propriety; and follow, according to the particular exigency, that method of rendering, which is the most likely to give the full force of the original, without its obscurity.\*

The

rally prevail; even although an explanatory note should be requisite to prevent mistakes.

\* Beside the pleonasm which our translators introduced into the English Bible from the originals, they seem to have admitted others that have little or no foundation in the originals. For example, in rendering the second persons of the imperative mood, they have often expressed the personal pronoun *thou* and *ye* when they are not in the Hebrew. Thus, Num. xvi. 19. "Only rebel not ye against the Lord; neither fear ye the people of the land." It may indeed be said that *ye* is implied in the verbs: but surely it is not necessary to express it; and if אַתֶּם had been in the Text, they could have done no more. At any rate, if it was implied there, it was equally implied in the last part of the same verse; which is nevertheless rendered "fear them not." Or is plainly superfluous and, moreover, a solecism, in such phrases as these: "Take an heifer of three years old. A lamb of one year old," &c. Are not, likewise, all the personal pro-



The same rules must direct him in rendering or not rendering  
 פה. יום. קול. רכר. שם. קרב. תוך. יר. פי. פה. &c. and how far, if he  
 depart from the Hebraism, he may lawfully vary its equivalent.  
 Let us now proceed to queries of a different nature.

It is well known that the singular number is, in Hebrew, very of-  
 ten used to express the whole genus or species of the thing signified.  
 Such Collectives are more or less frequent in every language, but  
 are of much greater extent in the Asiatic, than in the European  
 dialects. "The earth brought forth—the herb yielding seed—and  
 "the tree yielding fruit—And God made the beast of the earth after  
 "his kind—Have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl  
 "of the air—Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens."  
 Our translators did not always think themselves obliged to follow  
 so literal a mode of rendering. Gen. xxxii. 5. "I have oxen and asses."  
 Hebrew, "I have ox and ass." Levit. xi. 2. "These are the beasts  
 which ye shall eat." Hebrew, "This is the beast." Num. xxi. 7.

pronouns too frequently repeated, when there is no real change in the person: I should,  
 also, think that the word *that* is superfluous in such phrases as this, Jud. ii. 20. "And  
 he said because *that* this people &c." יען אשר and similar combinations being per-  
 fectly rendered by *because*. In like manner לעד and לעולם seem fully rendered by  
 "for ever," without the addition of "more." Nay a useless pleonasm may sometimes  
 arise from the very arrangement of a sentence: and I think there are no less than five  
 superfluous words in the following verse, Levit. xx. 2. "Whosoever HE BE of the  
 "children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, THAT giveth ANY of  
 "his seed unto Moloch, he shall surely be put to death." Read it without the words  
 in Capitals, and see if it be not as complete, more simple, and less embarrassed.  
 Nor is there a single word of the Hebrew unexpressed: for the אשר before תן is  
 included in the word "whosoever:" neither is there any need of Italics to connect the  
 sentence.

"Pray

“ Pray unto the Lord that he take away the serpents from us.” Hebrew, “ the serpent.” Surely they might have used the same freedom in many other places, which would have prevented a considerable number of ungrammatical combinations, which, by following the other mode, they could not easily avoid. I should therefore hope that no future translator will be blamed for rendering all such singulars in the plural number, unless when the word *ל* precedes them ; in which case it will much depend on circumstances, whether he shall or shall not prefer the singular. I need hardly add, that the same liberty should be taken with plurals, when they convey only a singular meaning.

Beside this enallage of numbers, which is extremely frequent, there is another of persons, the want of attention to which has introduced great confusion into modern translations, and given rise to many rash conjectural emendations of the text. It is, when in addresses to God, or even to man, the third person is elegantly used for the second ; and should always be rendered in the second. A proper instance occurs in Psalm civ. The Psalmist, in our common version, is made to address the Almighty in this manner : “ O Lord  
 “ my God, thou ART very great ; thou ART clothed with honour  
 “ and majesty. Who COVEREST thyself with light as with a gar-  
 “ ment ; who STRETCHETH out the heavens like a curtain ; who  
 “ LAYETH the beams of HIS chambers in the waters ; who MAKETH  
 “ the clouds HIS chariot ; who WALKETH upon the wings of the  
 “ wind ;



“ wind ; who MAKETH HIS angels spirits, and HIS ministers a  
 “ flaming fire ; who *laid* the foundations of the earth *that* it should  
 “ not be removed for ever : THOU COVEREDST it &c.” Here,  
 besides that a look of incoherency is given to the whole passage, the  
 rules of our Grammar require STRETCHST, LAYEST, MAKEST,  
 WALKST, as well as ART, COVEREST, COVEREDST ; and the pro-  
 noun THY throughout, instead of HIS. But the affix ך after עליותי,  
 מלאכי, &c. determined our translators to admit a solecism rather  
 than depart from the letter of their original.

It is to be remarked that the Hebrew words, which are here  
 translated in the second and third persons, are, in reality, active  
 participles, and that, in such cases, it is a frequent idiotism of the  
 Oriental languages to express the agent in the third person, though  
 understood of the second. The Syrians go a step further and extend  
 this licence to the third person of the preterite. “ O thou that  
 “ SAID.”—“ O thou son of man who JUDGEH his neighbour.”  
 —“ Jerufalem, Jerufalem, that KILLEH the prophets and STONETH  
 “ those who are sent to it.”\* And so in the plural, “ Tell me, ye, who  
 “ are willing that THEY (not ye) be under the law.” Nothing, then,  
 can be more just than St. Jerom’s remark, that these and such enallages  
 create (to those who attend not sufficiently to the genius of

\* The Greek has here partly the same enallagé—ἡ αποκταίνουσα τὰς προφητίας καὶ  
 λιθοβολοῦσα τὰς ἀπεσταλμένους πρὸς αὐτήν (not, πρὸς σὺ) See also Luc. i. 42.—Act. xvii. 3.—  
 Rom. vii. 4.

the Hebrew language) innumerable difficulties; but if they be restored, as they should be, to their proper cases, persons and tenses, what appeared obscure will become plain and obvious\*.

A difficulty here presents itself which has often puzzled me. In the injunctions which God gives to his people, the alternate change of numbers is extremely frequent, and often appears awkward in an English dress. "When *ye* reap the harvest of *your* land, "*thou* shalt not wholly reap the corners of *thy* field. *Ye* shall not "*round* the corners of *your* heads, neither shalt *thou* mar the corners "*of thy* beard.—If a stranger sojourn with *thee* in *thy* land, *ye* shall "*not* vex him—When a man or a woman shall commit any sin that "*men* commit, and *that* person be guilty, then *they* shall confess the "*sin* which *they* have done, and *he* shall recompense *his* trespass."†

\* The enallagé that gave rise to this discussion is not peculiar to the Oriental dialects. It is quite familiar at this day to the Italians and Spaniards. Nor are we without examples of it in our own tongue.

"Oh thou, who touch'd Isaiah's lips with fire."

In truth, our ideas are here divided between the personal pronoun and the relative. The latter is so generally connected with the third person, that we think any other connection unnatural. Thus when I say "Art thou the person who stole my watch?" I refer the relative to *person*, not to *thou*. So "thou who touched" is equivalent to "thou, the person, who touched."

† The same enallagé is often found where no precept is enjoined, particularly in poetical composition, although many such enallagés are, doubtless, chargeable on the Copyists, who frequently mistook and interchanged the suffixes. Examples may be seen in the blessing of Moses, Deuter. xxxiii. and in Psalm xvi.

Would



Would it, or should it be considered as dealing too freely with the Text, to reduce all that variety to one uniform tenor, and always translate such injunctions in the plural, except when they really are addressed to one person? The mode of translating which Broughton proposed, and which Castalio had, before him, adopted, would for the most part remove this difficulty; so much the more as our imperatives have no variety in termination; yet even this expedient would not always serve the purpose, as long as *thou* and *ye*, *thine* and *yours*, *he* and *they*, *his* and *theirs* are so often confounded. Besides, the future seems to give a solemnity and force to the precept, which is not so apparent in the simple imperative; and “Thou shalt not steal——Thou shalt not commit adultery——Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, &c.” would, I think, be ill exchanged for “Steal not”——“commit not adultery”——“covet not, &c.” And, indeed, though in all other such cases, I should be inclined to use the plural; throughout the Decalogue I would retain the singular.

As idiomatical pleonasm may be retrenched in a translation without the smallest injury to the original author; so may his ellipses be with propriety supplied, if the supplements be virtually contained in the elliptical phrase. Putting such supplements in Italics, is a mere modern refinement, unknown to the most literal ancient translators. Even Pagninus himself did not dream of so silly a device. The father of it, I believe, was Arias Montanus; who yet, probably, never meant that it should be adopted in a translation for common

use. His sole intention seems to have been to give to his half-learned readers some idea of the Hebrew idiom; and that, indeed, is the only advantage that can be derived from his labour. It is therefore no small matter of surprise, that he should, in this respect, have become a model to posterior translators\*; and continued to be so, until your Lordship broke the enchantment.

We should laugh at the man, who in rendering these words of Lucian, *ἢ μοι σχολή*, "I am not at leisure," should, to shew his strict attention and fidelity to the Original, distinguish the English words in this manner, "I *am* not *at* leisure:" which, after all, do not entirely exhibit the Greek idiom—Or who, of the Latin words "*Quid multa?*" should thus variegate the version: "What *need* is *there* for many words?" Or who, having to express in French the following sentence: "The news you bring are too good, not to wish they were true;" should deem it his duty, as a faithful interpreter, to put in Italics every word in his translation that has not a correspondent word in his original, even when the word is evidently understood, and might with equal propriety be expressed: "Les nouvelles *que* vous apportez sont trop bonnes *pour* ne *pas* souhaiter *qu'*elles fussent vraies."

\* What is still more astonishing, some of those who translated from the Vulgate, paid the same scrupulous regard to its peculiar ellipses; although the author of the Vulgate was a free translator, and often abandoned the idiom of the Hebrew without necessity. But they thought, I suppose, that they could not, as Catholics, shew less respect for the Latin version, than Protestants had done for the Original.

But



But is it not as ridiculous in a Version of the Bible, to distinguish by Italics those necessary and implied supplements which we so frequently meet with in modern translations : “ God saw that *it was* “ good—This *is* now bone of my bone—These *are* the generations “ of Noah—The men of Sodom *were* wicked. In those days there “ was no King in Israel ; every one did *that which was* right in his “ own eyes, &c.” What else is this but to count syllables and play with words ? Italics are not only often unnecessary, but, sometimes, degrade the Text. When Achish, for example (1 Sam. xxi. 15.), is made to say, “ Shall this *fellow* come into my house.” The word *fellow* is here worse than superfluous. It presents to the reader an idea that is not in the original ; and is, besides, a term not only low and vulgar ; but also, if we attend to its etymology, improperly applied.

What has been said of the Pleonasm and Ellipsis, is more or less applicable to the Enallagé, Hypallagé, and other subordinate figures of speech, in the rendering of all which a translator should, I presume, be more studious of retaining the genuine sense than the precise idiom of his original ; when by endeavouring to express the latter, he would expose himself to the danger of obscurity, ambiguity, or barbarism.

I come now, my Lord, to a question of great importance, nearly connected with the preceding sections :—How far and in what circumstances is the Hebrew arrangement of words and sentences, to be followed in a translation ?

And here, I think, one general proposition may be laid down as incontrovertible ; namely, That mode of arrangement is always the best which expresses the meaning of the original in the most intelligible and energetic terms ; and such as the author himself would, most probably, have chosen, if he had written in the translator's language.

Luckily for an English translator of the Bible, he will not be often under any great necessity of departing much from the arrangement of the Hebrew ; especially in the poetical parts of Scripture, where the two idioms are so congenial as to appear almost like twin-brothers \*. Sometimes, however, he will see strong reasons for changing the order even in poetry, and still more frequently in prose. This will happen either in the arrangement of the several words of a single sentence, or of the several members of a compound sentence, or of several different sentences together.

In the first case it cannot be doubted, that it is not only allowable, but often necessary to change the order of the Hebrew. There is hardly a verse in the Bible, in which instances do not occur. For, what Ainsworth, or other English *Aquila*, would venture to say, " In the beginning created God the Heavens—And saw God the

\* James's translators did not always avail themselves of this natural advantage ; and Purver almost never attended to it.

" light



“light that it was good——The lamp of God before it went out——

“The labour of thy hands for thou shalt eat?\*

It is little less indubitable, that the arrangement of the several members of a sentence may sometimes require to be changed. Thus Exod. xvii. 20. the order of the Hebrew is this: “He that sacrificeth to other Gods, shall be utterly destroyed, save to the Lord only:” but our translators judiciously changed that order, and rendered, “He that sacrificeth unto any God†, save unto the Lord only, shall be utterly destroyed.” So Exod. xii. 15. this sentence, “Whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day,” is in the Hebrew so arranged, that the last comma precedes the second, which in English would be extremely uncouth and confused. In all similar cases therefore the arrangement of the original should be departed from, and had our translators more frequently done so, they would have left much fewer obscurities in their translation.

The only real difficulty, then, regards the third case. Is it lawful to transpose whole complete sentences, when their natural order

\* Yet even this mode of construction our language admits: and it was often followed by our translators. Then sang Moses—Then came Amalek—The right shoulder shall ye give, &c.” *Quer.* would it not be better to restrain this inverted position of nominative and verb to interrogatory sentences, and poetical composition?

† They followed the present faulty text; in which אחרים is wanting.

seems

seems to be inverted, and when there is reason to suspect that they have been shifted from their first place in the original?

That transpositions may have been made in the original texts of the Bible, as well as in other writings, will hardly be denied: nay, that they have actually been sometimes made is unquestionable: but I fear, some modern interpreters have been too ready to find them where they are not, or, at least, where there are not sufficient proofs or probability of their existing. I would therefore be extremely cautious in admitting them, and consider them nearly in the same light with a various lection. If there were found a diversity of order in the Hebrew manuscripts, or in the ancient versions, I should think myself at liberty to follow that order which should appear to me the most consistent with the context: but if all the manuscripts and versions agreed, I should be apt to look upon it as an original synchysis; and content myself with pointing out, in a note, a seemingly more natural order.

At the same time I confess, that I would not blame a translator for pursuing a different plan. For, provided there be nothing essential retrenched from the text, or added to it, I see no harm that can ensue from putting one sentence before or after another, on rational grounds\*. Yet, as this licence, once assumed, would probably pro-

\* *Quo ordine quid referatur, modo constat veritas, aut nihili aut parum interest.*

SCALIGER.



duce too great a diversity of arrangement (for almost every one would arrange in a different manner), I would rather be for retaining the present order in all such cases as admit only a doubt of its being the right one.

Before I dismiss this subject of arrangement, I will just remark, that translators in general have paid too little attention to it. An improper disposition of words in a sentence, is little less offensive to the eye and ear than confusion in the ornaments of a building, or disharmony in a piece of music; beside its being productive of obscurity, ambiguity, and even of a false meaning.—To the example I have given in my PROSPECTUS, from Ezek. permit me to add a few more from our last translation. Judg. ii. 21. “ I also will not  
“ henceforth drive out any from before them, of the nations which  
“ Joshua left.” Here the sentence is embarrassed by *any* being out of its place. Exod. xxxv. 29. “ All manner of work which the Lord  
“ had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses.” Here the meaning is ambiguous; and a small change in the arrangement would have prevented that ambiguity. Gen. xiii. 10. “ Lot lifted  
“ up his eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well  
“ watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Go-  
“ morra, as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as  
“ thou goest to Zoar.” Here we are presented with a wrong meaning; and the synchysis of the Hebrew should not have been followed

lowed in a vernacular version\*. The same ambiguity is often found in the New Testament, from the same cause. For example, 1 Cor. xvi. 11. "With the brethren," is so placed that it may signify either that St. Paul looked for Timothy and the brethren; or that St. Paul and the brethren looked for Timothy:" By arranging thus, "For I, with the brethren, look for him," the ambiguity is removed. Acts xxi. 5. "They all brought us on our way, with wives and children." Qu. whose wives and children? See also Acts xxii. 29. Romans iv. 16, 17, 18.

Beside the general care with which a translator should arrange his words and sentences throughout; ought he not moreover to aim at that diversity of structure which may be remarked in the different sorts of compositions in all languages, and is strongly distinguishable in the Hebrew writings? A poetical period will admit, and sometimes require, an arrangement, that in prose would be highly incongruous. Even in prose there is, I conceive, a real, though not so striking a difference, in the disposition of the component parts of an historical sentence, a precept, a parable, and an apophthegm. The last, in particular, seems to demand a certain degree of artificial neatness peculiar to itself; and which makes it the boundary, as it

\* The last revisers of the Geneva French version have well rendered this sentence.  
 "Lot ayant élevé les yeux, vit toute la plaine du Jourdain, qui étoit, avant que  
 "l'Eternel eut détruit Sodome et Gomorra, arrosée partout jusqu'à ce que tu viennes  
 "en Tsoar, comme un jardin de l'Eternel, et comme le pays d'Egypte."

were,



were, between prose and poetry; if it do not, indeed, belong to the latter.

At any rate, as Hebrew poetry is confessedly arranged in a very different manner from Hebrew prose, it is surely the duty of a translator to endeavour to imitate that difference in his version. And here it is, I think, that modern translations, our public one not excepted, are the most susceptible of further improvement. Your Lordship set the example; which has been successfully followed by Mr. Blayney and Bishop Newcome; and after which I also have attempted to form my imperfect copy.

But should a version of the poetical parts of scripture be divided into lines or hemistichs, corresponding with what is called Hebrew metre? This method, first practised by the Germans\*, has been adopted by the writers of most other nations; and more especially by those of our own. Bishop Newcome has even made it one of his fifteen rules for a good translation.

Notwithstanding all this, I cannot help seriously doubting of its propriety. I can see no force or beauty it adds to the text, nor profit nor pleasure it can bring to the reader. On the contrary, I

\* True it is, that we meet with a sort of stichical division, not only of the poetical, but likewise of the sentential books of scripture, in the Alexandrian and other Greek manuscripts; and we learn from Hesychius that this was an early invention: but I question if any of our modern metrical translators would take it for their model.

think, it considerably disjoins and disfigures the one, and often perplexes and puzzles the other. Permit me to lay before your Lordship a specimen from your own Ifaiah; the first that presents itself.

And it shall be, when Moab shall see,  
That he hath wearied himself out on the high place,  
That he shall enter into his sanctuary  
To intercede: but he shall not prevail.

Ifaiah xvi. 12.

Or the following from Bishop Newcome's Zechariah:

In that day Jehovah will defend  
The inhabitants of Jerusalem:  
And he that is feeble among them shall be  
In that day, as David.

Does it really appear to your Lordship, that in either of these instances the text looks to advantage; or that the reader will be better pleased to see it arrayed in this whimsical manner, than in the sober garb of measured prose? I greatly fear he will not.

Indeed this mode of dividing a translation of the Hebrew poetry, seems very similar to that which was followed in the old literal Latin versions of Homer; which not only give us no adequate idea of the beauties of the great original; but create an eternal disgust to the reader, by displaying before his eyes all the external



appearance of verse, without any of its properties. Yet those Latin lines have one advantage over your English ones: we are sure they correspond exactly with so many Greek verses; whereas no one will, I presume, assert the same of any stichical version made from the Hebrew.

You, my Lord, of all men know best, how little we are acquainted with the measure and mechanism of Hebrew verse; and how capricious, for the most part, are the divisions that have been made of them, even by the most learned Hebraists. What one would divide into long lines, another would divide into short; and what by this one would be combined into stanzas, would by that one be arranged in separate hemistichs. So that in reality, to give a version divided into lines of any sort; would be to give us no more than the arbitrary notions of the divider; and could only serve to impress a false, or at least an uncertain idea on the mind of the reader; without contributing either to his instruction or edification\*.

For

\* Such divisions are not only often arbitrary, but sometimes lead to delusion. I shall give an instance from Mr. Blayney's Jeremiah, Lam. ii. 17.

"Jehovah hath accomplished that which he had decreed,  
he hath fulfilled his word;

"What he constituted in the days of old, he hath destroyed and not spared."

To this construction he was "determined," he says, "by the metre." I should be glad to know by what rules of metre. Surely not by the parallelism, which is manifestly destroyed by this division——But let any one read the passage, without imagi-

For what instruction or edification can the mere English reader receive from such irregular and ill-connected lines as these, presented to him as an exemplification of Hebrew verse?

In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing:

There Ephraim committeth fornication;

Israel is polluted.

Moreover, O Judah, an harvest is appointed of thee

Among those who lead away the captivity of my people.

Zech. viii. 21.

Or these:

And the inhabitants of one city shall go

Into another, saying:

Let us surely go to entreat the face of Jehovah,

And to seek Jehovah God of Hosts:

I will go also.

nary laws of metre in his head; and I am confident, he will naturally divide the words with all the ancient translators, in the following manner:

Jehovah hath done—what he had devised;

Hath accomplished the purpose—which he decreed of old;

Hath destroyed—and hath not spared——

Not to mention that Mr. Blayney's last line presents an ambiguity, which a common reader might easily conceive to be a flat contradiction. "He hath destroyed and not "spared, what he had constituted in the days of old." What? had he destroyed his own decrees? It is certain that is not Mr. Blayney's meaning; but his meaning is not so obvious as it should be; and even if his construction were allowed to be right, perspicuity required that "What he constituted in the days of old," should be included in a parenthesis; or the word *what* changed into *as*.

Were



Were the text for public service to be thus divided, the best readers would, I believe, make but an awkward appearance in delivering the most sublime oracles of religion. The eye and the ear would be at continual variance; the tones and cadences would be perpetually confounded, and grating disharmony attend the pronunciation of almost every period.

On the whole, then, may I not appeal to your Lordship's judgment, even from your own practice; that in giving a version for general reading, such a division of those parts which are supposed to be poetry, would be attended with manifest inconvenience; and with no visible advantage; and that, therefore, a plain prose-like version, which should preserve as much as possible of what your Lordship has so ably proved to constitute the essence of Hebrew poetry, would be greatly preferable.

The Public will, perhaps, here, tax me with presumption for offering to differ from so many learned men. But I trust I have done it with all due deference and modesty. I have candidly proposed my own doubts; I wish to have them canvassed; am ready to hear what may be said on the other side of the question, and disposed to give up my opinion to the general voice.

Although a proper arrangement of words and sentences will, certainly, go a great way towards removing a number of ambiguities, it will not always be found sufficient to give to a translation of the Bible,

Bible, that degree of perspicuity, which a book intended for general instruction seems to require : and, therefore, every other mean should be employed, that can serve for that purpose, without hurting the integrity of the text, or altering its genuine meaning. Among these means I would propose the following licences, all which have already been taken by some one or other translator ; and the greatest part of them by those even who profess to give the most literal versions.

Among the causes of ambiguity in the Hebrew text, one is, the too frequent use of the verb, without its proper nominative expressed. Thus Num. xxiii. 4. " And God met Balaam ; and he " said to him, I have prepared seven altars, &c." The meaning, which the context only leads us to, would be more obvious, if the  $\text{וַיֹּאמֶר}$  were rendered " who," as was often done by the author of the Vulgate, and not unfrequently by some of the most scrupulous modern translators. Our own, sometimes, though rarely, used this licence. Thus Judges iii. 19. " But he himself (Ehud) turned " again from the quarries that were by Gilgal, and said, I have a " secret errand to thee, O King ; who said ( $\text{וַיֹּאמֶר}$ ) keep silence." And Jerem. xxxvi. 32. " Then Jeremiah took another roll and gave it to Baruch the Scribe, the son of Neriab, who wrote ( $\text{וַיִּכְתֹּב}$ ) therein, &c." See also Judg. iii. 31. Prov. xi. 22.—Why not extend it to all similar cases ? It is indeed hardly conceivable how many obscurities and ambiguities are made to disappear by this single licence.

Another



Another mean has been employed to remove this species of ambiguity; especially when the verb repeated is **אמר**. When the second or third **ויאמר** has a different (though not expressed) nominative from the preceding one, St. Jerom very often, our first translators frequently, and our last not seldom render it "he answered;" which not only excludes all doubtfulness of meaning, but breaks that colloquial monotony, which arises from the constant return of "he said," and "he said" again\*.

Yet neither of these expedients will always take away the ambiguity. Thus Num. xxiii. 7. "And he took up his parable." Who took up his parable? Not the person last mentioned in the text, for that was the King of Moab; but Balaam, mentioned in the preceding verse. Would it not be better then to insert *Balaam* in Italics before "took up his parable;" so much the rather, as almost all translators, from the Seventy downwards, have, in other places not more ambiguous than this, taken the like freedom.

There is yet another method, which, if discriminately used, might serve to give a greater degree of clearness to the text, and at the same time prevent a tedious repetition of the copulative. It is to change the first of two or more consecutive preterites into the participle of the same verb. So, often, the Greek trans-

\* Sometimes the Vulgate, for the sake of variety, joins this expedient with the former. *Et ecce Angelus Domini de caelo clamavit dicens: Abraham! Abraham! Qui respondit (ויאמר) adsum.* Gen. xxiii. 11.

lators.

lators. λαβουσα του καρπου αυτης, εφαγεν—προσκαλεσαμενος δε Ισαακ τον Ιακωβ, επεν. εξαραι Ιακωβ τις ποδας, επορευθη. And still more frequently the Vulgate: *Egressusque Cain a facie Domini, habitavit, &c.—Bibensque vinum, inebriatus est.—Incedentes retrorsum, operuerunt verenda patris sui.—Reversus invenit stantem Balac, &c.*

Although our last translators seldom adopted this method, they very often took another equivalent to it. Of two copulatives they suppressed the one, and rendered the other by *when*; putting the subsequent verb in the preterpluperfect tense. Instances may be seen in almost every chapter. The Arabic and other ancient versions had given them a precedent.

As the omission of the nominative before its verb often begets ambiguity, so the too frequent repetition of it produces a disagreeable tautology. In such cases the respective pronoun, it should seem, might be used instead of it, when there is no danger of mistake. For this too we have the sanction of the ancient versions, particularly the Vulgate; and even our first English translators: but the masoretic superstition of posterior times made our last revisors afraid to follow their example.

The Hebrews have a peculiar mode of expressing themselves in a negative manner, which is equivalent to a very strong affirmation, but of an opposite nature. Thus, “not to heal one” is “to inflict sores on one.”—And “not to find a thing” is “to lose it.”—In  
all



all such phrases, I am of opinion that the meaning, not the words, should be attended to; and the phrase rendered equivalently. Take an example from Hosea xii. 8. "All his labour shall not be found to him" (which is Bishop Newcome's translation of a corrected text) is, doubtless, equivalent to "All his labours shall be lost." Would it not therefore be better so to translate, than be under the necessity of making out the sense by the aid of a word in Italics; which, after all, presents an ambiguous meaning? "All his labours shall not be found *profitable* to him." *Some* of them, then, may be found profitable.

There is yet another negative mode of expressing an affirmation, more common still than the former, introduced by the interrogative particle הלא or הלא \* "Are not they beyond the Jordan?" "Have not I commanded thee?" "Is not the arrow beyond thee?" "Are not these things written in the books of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?" In such phrases, I presume, the affirmative may be used at the discretion of the translator; and will often be preferable to the negative.

The remaining part of my queries regards, either certain Hebrew words, which, though their meaning be sufficiently known, seem to have been improperly rendered in English; or English words, which, though they were, perhaps, originally, as proper terms as

\* *Negativa addita interrogationi adfirmandi vim habet; idem est quod omnino.* Tympius, Notæ in Noldium.

the language afforded, are not quite so consonant with our present ideas, or agreeable to the rules of our present improved Grammar— Or, in fine, such expressions as may seem profane or indelicate, if literally understood.

At the head of the first class I shall place מלך, which our translators render “ a Duke.” As this word is, among the people, understood to denote only a certain order of nobility; would not the meaning of the Hebrew be better conveyed by the generical term *Chief* or *Prince*?

The word נפש, which in its primary signification denotes the vital principle, whatever it be, that makes matter capable of vegetation, increase, sensation, &c. is, in the Bible, chiefly appropriated to animal life; and more particularly to that of the human species. Our translators commonly rendered it *soul*; and, in many places, that may be deemed no improper rendering, especially in poetry; but, in general, I think, it should be translated *person*; and with the pronominal suffixes, often left untranslated. This, I am persuaded, would prevent many misconceptions of the true meaning of the text, as well as a number of false consequences deducible from such misconceptions. We cannot easily change the popular ideas that usage hath affixed to the terms of our own language; but we may frequently accommodate the terms of another language to those ideas. A philosophical dialect never existed, and probably never will exist.



As נפש is the vital principle itself, which in animals, according to the Hebrew physiology, resides in the blood; so רוח, the natural meaning of which is *air* or *wind*, is tralatitiously used for animal respiration, or that portion of air which is necessary to keep the vital principle in motion, and which the Scripture calls emphatically "the breath of life," and thence it denotes what we call the whole spiritual part of man, or the human soul. By a still stronger figure it is made to signify that supernatural influence by which the Deity is supposed to operate on his creatures, not improperly called divine inspiration, or divine impulse. In this sense it is often personified, and called a *Spirit* either good or bad. Thus 1 Sam. xvi. 13, 14. "The Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward, but the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil Spirit from the Lord troubled him." This is, perhaps, the boldest metaphor in the Oriental languages; and has given occasion to many absurd and ridiculous notions both among Jews and Christians. It is, I confess, a very hard matter for a translator to find terms adequate to all the various literal and figurative meanings of the word: but it should be his study to seek them, and to make the best discrimination possible: so as not to present his reader with an idea that is not contained in the original. If he cannot always accomplish this in the text, a short explanatory note should be added for that purpose.

Our translators have often made a proper distinction in the rendering of this word; but sometimes also they seem to have been led by

theological system to translate it *Spirit*, when some other term would have been more suitable. Your Lordship has most properly corrected Isaiah xiv. 7. But are there not many other similar passages that stand equally in need of correction? One in particular presents itself at the very threshold of the sanctuary, that has been long a stumbling-block to those that entered. Gen. i. 2. וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם. "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Although this translation greatly diminishes the force and beauty of the narrative, is incompatible with the arrangement of the original context, and was rightly understood and rendered by those of the ancient interpreters, who were the most likely to perceive the general meaning of the Hebrew; yet as the Seventy had literally translated it, and as it seemed favourable to one of the capital tenets of the Christian Church, it was eagerly adopted by almost all Christian Expositors, and generally applied to the Holy Ghost. To make the text tally better with this application, the true sense of the word מְרַחֶפֶת was also perverted. It was remarked, it seems, by some Syrian\*, that רָחַפּ in that dialect might signify *to brood*. This acceptance, which was itself but a figurative meaning at most, was still farther improved into another figurative meaning; and thus, what was at first only "a great wind agitating the waters," became in time the third person of the Trinity, hatching chaotic matter into life, as a bird does

\* We learn this from St. Basil; and some have supposed that Syrian to be St. Ephrem. Ephrem, however, teaches quite the contrary.



her eggs. Milton accordingly places him in that attitude, and makes him *with mighty wings outspread, sit brooding on the vast abyss*. This may be Poetry, but it is neither Scripture nor Philosophy. Another instance I shall give from the Psalms. Ps. civ. 4. is thus rendered by our last translators: "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire." That a servile translator from the Vulgate should be guilty of so egregious a mistake, is not, perhaps, to be wondered at. He had before him an ambiguous text; and might think it incumbent on him to be as obscure and unintelligible as *his* original; but that one who translates immediately from the Hebrew, and is but moderately acquainted with its genius, should so miserably degrade this sublime passage, is surprising indeed. "Who maketh the winds his messengers; and his ministers, the flashy lightning." A bold and sublime idea, and worthy an Oriental bard\*

Although משפט is, in many places, properly rendered *judgment*, there are other places where, on account of the various acceptations of the English term, that rendering seems inadmissible. For example, Job xxvii. 2. אל הסיר משפטי is translated "God hath taken away my judgment;" a meaning very different from that of the original, which evidently signifies "God hath put off my cause; hath declined bringing me to trial." Our translators might have,

\* Bishop Hare has well rendered this verse in Latin, *faciens Angelos suos, ventos; Ministros suos, ignem flammantem*: but Green, who took Bishop Hare for his model, has ill-translated into English the first line. "Who maketh his angels winds,"

in some sort, removed the ambiguity, by rendering משפטי "my  
"right," as they did in the sixth verse of the last-quoted chapter;  
where "I lie against my judgment" would not present a more  
incongruous meaning, than, in the former passage, "God hath  
"taken away my judgment."

It cannot be too often repeated, that perspicuity is the chief  
quality of a good translation; to attain which, it will always be  
lawful for a translator to paraphrase what cannot be literally ren-  
dered without obscurity. From this principle your Lordship has  
clearly and elegantly translated Isaiah xl. 27. "And my cause  
"passeth unregarded by my God," which in our vulgar version  
is perplexed and ambiguous: "My judgment is passed over from  
"my God."

I also doubt if the words אמן and אמונה be always properly ren-  
dered *faithful, true; faithfulness, truth*; and I should be apt to think  
that *veracious* and *veracity* might sometimes be fitly employed to ex-  
press their meaning.

Is there any word in our language, or could any word be ana-  
logically introduced into it, that would, in any degree, express  
the relation between משפחה and שפה—or between שבט a *tribe* and  
שבט a *sceptre*? I fear not.

The God of the Israelites is particularly distinguished by the  
name ידוה; of which neither the precise meaning nor the genuine  
pronun-



pronunciation is well known. *Jehovah* is a barbarous term, that was never heard of before the sixteenth century\*; neither Pagninus, nor Munster, nor even Montanus, used it in their versions: but Junius and Castalio having once given it a sanction, it came gradually into general usage among Latin translators and commentators; and has of late made its way into vernacular versions†. Bate, your Lordship, Green, Blayney, and Bishop Newcome, have all adopted it; and the last-mentioned writer thinks it should always be used.

I have, notwithstanding, some doubt about it; which I beg leave to propose. As the word LORD has been so long employed among Christians, to denote the Supreme Being, and is the only one in the New Testament by which he is known, I should be strongly inclined to retain it in the Old; so much the more, because the ancient Greek, Syriac, Latin and Arabic interpreters respectively rendered יהוה by a similar term *Kyrios*, מריא, Dominus, רב. Besides, we sometimes meet with יהוה in construction with צבאות: which we could hardly render “Jehovah of Hosts;” and Bishop Newcome himself allows that, in such cases, we must supply אלהים and say “Jehovah God of Hosts.”

\* Drusius could find no higher authority for it than that of Galatinus.

† I know not, however, if it have yet been admitted into any vernacular versions except that of Michaelis in German. Luther's, the Dutch, Danish, Old Swedish, Italian, and Spanish have *Lord*. The French Genevan has the *Eternal*, which has been adopted by the Paris Capuchins in their late translations.

There

There is only one objection that now occurs. The word אֲדֹנָי is also translated *Lord*, and with the suffix *my Lord*, although it is only a term of respect applied to human beings; and most probably never applied to the Deity without the repetition of אֲדֹנָיִם, "Lord of Lords\*." It should seem, therefore, that a distinction should be made between the terms. Our translators made a distinction. They rendered יְהוָה THE LORD, and put it in capitals; and אֲדֹנָי *my Lord*, in common letters. If a farther discrimination be deemed expedient, let some other term be used to express אֲדֹנָי; and I see no one so proper as *Sir*. It will, perhaps, be said that the term is too trite and familiar; but it is not more so than אֲדֹנָי must have been in Judea; nor can it, on that account, be more improper in the Old Testament than in the New; where we have "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with," John iv. 11. And in the same chapter, "Sir, give me this water.—Sir, I perceive thou art a prophet.—Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field, &c." And in the plural, Acts xxvii. 21. "Sirs," (said St. Paul) "ye should have hearkened unto me;" and v. 25. "Wherefore, Sirs, be of good cheer." The Greek indeed is here *αὐτοὶ*; but if the

\* In the present Masoretic text, indeed, and even long before the existence of the Masora, we frequently find אֲדֹנָי for יְהוָה (though with considerable variation in the manuscripts); but we owe this, I suspect, to the superstition of the Jews. There is not a single instance of it, I believe, in the Samar. Pentateuch. See a curious passage relative to this matter in Mr. White's translation of the *Preface to the Arabic Hexaplar Pentateuch*, in the Bodleian Library—Letter to the Bishop of London, p. 22.



Apostle had spoke in Hebrew, it would have been אֲדוֹנִי. At any rate, the term has the authority of our last translators. Nay, we meet with it, once at least, in the Old Testament. "O Sir," (said Joseph's brethren to the Steward) "we came indeed down at the first time to buy bread." Gen. xliii. 20. I would therefore propose using, throughout, the word LORD for יְהוָה, and the word Sir\* for אֲדוֹנִי.

It has been well remarked by Le Cene and others, that *naked* is often too strong an expression for עֶרְוָה; and yet, perhaps, we have not in our language a suitable modifying term. The same observation is applicable to בָּרַךְ. בַּעַל. עֲנָה. קוֹם. פָּקֵד. עָלָה. יָדַע. זָנָה. דָּרַשׁ. &c. which we often find it impossible to render with that degree of propriety we wish: Is not Horace's maxim, then, of *innovating a little* here applicable? And might not a translator be allowed to borrow from other languages such terms as are easily convertible, and readily understood; or to revive such obsolete ones of our own as would express the meaning with more discriminating accuracy; or, in fine, to extend occasionally the acceptation of words now in

\* This, however, can only be done when אֲדוֹנִי is in the compellative case — for we do not say, *My Sir* such-a-one, as the French and Dutch do; nor even *Sir* such-a-one, as the Italians and Spaniards do: and therefore we must, in all other cases, render it either *My Lord*, or *My Master*: for *Mr.* would hardly be sufferable in a translation of the Bible.

use, where there is no danger of error or confusion by such extension\*.

Of English terms, that may have been proper enough at the time our translation was made; but which now seem to convey either a different meaning, or a meaning not quite so characteristical as others that have been since adopted, I shall content myself with giving the following, as examples.

Our translators were led to render וראיתן על האבנים, *Exod. i. 16.* "And see them upon the stools;" from its being then customary to deliver women on a sort of stool made for the purpose, and kept by the midwife. But, besides that it is extremely doubtful if אבן ever signify a stool; that practice being now generally discontinued in Britain†, and the expression "upon the stools," presenting an idea very different from that of *delivery*, should not the term itself be changed; or rather another turn given to the sentence, which

\* Of this last kind of licence, I will just propose one example: "To *divide* light from darkness" has always appeared to me a term not sufficiently proper to express the true meaning of ברל in this phrase. The Latin *distinguo* seems much more suitable. Why then might we not use the word *distinguish* in the same signification? So much the rather, because that is really its primitive meaning, although it has gradually lost it, and is now seldom used but in a metaphorical sense. Your Lordship's approbation would go a great way to embolden me in taking a few such licences. See some sensible reflections on this subject in *Maty's Review* for June 1786.

† The practice is still used in Holland and other northern nations; and even in the Royal Lying-in Hospital of Copenhagen. See *Medic. Comment. Vol. IV.*

should



should sufficiently express its meaning without being liable to future misconception?

*Audience* formerly signified the *act of bearing*; and so it was used by Milton; but as it now seems obsolete in that meaning, should we not substitute *bearing* in its stead; and translate Gen. xxv. 10. "And Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the children of Heth?" *Travail*, too, for *labour* is become altogether obsolete. Yet both Bishop Newcome and Mr. Blayney have retained it. "Get you to the mountains—Get you hence—I will get me unto the Great One;" and such-like expressions appear also to be justly going into disuse; and have moreover an imperious and vulgar air.

*Peradventure* is a word which we have no occasion for; and which is now hardly ever used.

I have, elsewhere, given it as my opinion, that words which we have once fairly adopted from other languages are, for the most part, more noble, more expressive and discriminating than our own original ones. Thus, I think, to *assemble* is better than to *gather together*; *convoke* than *call together*, *gratuitously* than *freely*.

*Meat-offering* was never the most proper term for *מנחה*, but is now still less so from the more limited acceptation of the word *meat*.

To *discover*, or *uncover*, seems sometimes used in a sense which it will hardly bear. Thus Nahum iii. 5. "I will discover thy skirts upon thy face." Or, as Bishop Newcome renders, "I will uncover thy skirts before thy face." We cannot, I think, say with propriety to *uncover* the thing *covering*, but the thing *covered*. Some other term, therefore, should be found to express the Hebrew word גלה, both here and in other similar places.

*Exalted* seems to be improper, when applied to material objects, as "Every valley shall be exalted." Isaiah xl. 4.

The word *unto* seems frequently misused in our present version. It has there four different acceptations. For first, it marks the dative case: "Unto Adam he said." Secondly, it denotes motion to a place: "And Moses went up unto the mountains." Thirdly, it precedes the farthest extreme of local situation: "From the river of Egypt unto the great river." Fourthly, it is placed before the last period of time: "Since the days of Joshua unto that day."—Now I should think that it is proper only in the second and third examples; but not in the first and fourth; where *to* and *until* appear to be more grammatical.

Are the words *wherefore*, *therefore*, *wherein*, *therein*, *whereof*, *thereof*, *whereby*, *thereby*, *whereunto*, *thereunto*, *heretofore*, *theretofore*, and other such-like compounds to be retained? To be convinced that they are not strictly grammatical, we have only to analyze them, for who could bear, *for there*, *for where*, *in where*, *in there*, *of where*,



*where, of there, &c?* And yet I fear we cannot well do without them, particularly the two first.

The word *there* is also frequently used in another manner, the propriety of which might be questioned; and where indeed it seems to be a mere expletive. Thus when we say, "There was a man in the land of Hus:" we say no more than "A man was in the land of Hus." And when we say, "Let *there* be light—Let *there* be a firmament, &c."—We might say "Let light be—Let a firmament be"—or even "Be light—Be a firmament."—And in the imperative mood we frequently use this more regular mode of expression, especially in poetry; but in the indicative, it would seem uncouth, and perhaps at first ridiculous, because our ears are not accustomed to it.

Some think that the expletives, *do, doth, did*, are often a beauty, in as much as they add a particular emphasis to the expression; and your Lordship has given countenance to this opinion in your Elements of English Grammar. Is it founded in nature? and would not Gen. iii. 13. be as forcibly rendered, "The serpent beguiled me, and I ate;" as "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat?" It seems still more superfluous in such texts as the following, Gen. vi. 17. "I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth." Gen. xxvi. 30. "And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink." Exod. x. 5. "And they (the locusts) did eat every herb of the field." In general, then, would it not be better to restrict it entirely to negative

gative sentences; or at most to extend it to a concession or strong affirmation? Thus, Joshua ii. 4. might be rendered "There did come men unto me." And Gen. xviii. 15. is very properly "Nay, but thou didst laugh."

Is the expression "to take to wife" reconcileable with any rules of grammar or analogy? And, if not, how are we to translate לקח לאשה? Dr. Goffet suggests "to take for a wife," as he thinks *to marry* would hardly be endured; yet our translators have used it in 2 Chron. xiii. 2. where they render וישא לו נשים ארבע עשרה "and married fourteen wives." See also Gen. xix. 14. Num. xii. 1. and 1 Chron. ii. 21.

If we at all retain the word *befeech*, should not the preterite *befought* be at least exploded; and *befeeched* used instead of it?

Our translators, for the most part, carefully distinguished the nominative plural *ye* from the accusative *you*; should not due regard be still paid to this distinction, in spite of the propensity of our present writers to neglect it? Would you not also retain the termination *eth* in the third person singular of the indicative mood?

I would, also, fain persuade myself, that we should not confound nor use indiscriminately, the terms *lo* and *behold*. The former I would employ, when there is nothing in the narrative immediately pointed at; the latter, when some object is indicated as present.



sent. Thus I would say, "Behold the man—Behold the Lamb of God:" but "Lo! I bring a deluge—Lo! it was Leah—Lo! it became a serpent." So that *Lo* may be always considered as a mere interjection; *Behold* as the imperative of a verb. Is this distinction more than ideal\*?

The definite article *the* seems to be often inserted where it should not be inserted. Thus Gen. i. 6. "God said; let there be a firmament; and let it divide THE waters from THE waters." It should be "Waters from waters," as our older translators have it. Deut. xx. 5, 6. "Left he die in THE battle," should be "Left he die in battle;" and so they have it in the next verse. On the other hand, they have omitted it where it should not be omitted. Thus Eccles. xxii. 6. "But stripes and correction of wisdom," should be "The stripes and correction, &c." Nor is this omission always of small moment. A notable example occurs, Rom. ii. 12. where the omission of the article not only mars† the meaning, but gives an air of

\* This interjection, so extremely frequent in the Hebrew writings, is sometimes rendered by the ancients, especially by St. Jerom, by an equivalent term. Thus Gen. xxix. 25. for וַיַּדּוּ בִבְקֹר וְהָנָה הִיא לֵאמֹר, the VULGATE has "facto mane vidit Liam." And SYR. וַכֵּן הָיָה צִפְרָא וְהָיָה לֵיאָה הִיא; and when the morning came, and he saw that it was Lia, &c. This licence, I think, may be occasionally used, particularly when the interjection is repeated in the sentence; and thereby embarrasses it. Sometimes a transposition will have the same good effect; and sometimes it may be accounted a pleonasm, and omitted.

† According to Johnson this word is obsolete. But why is it obsolete? It was used by Shakespeare, Milton, Waller, and Dryden; is a Teutonic, nay a Hebrew radical word; and even in its sound more expressive of the meaning than any of its substitutes. Let us not always be biased by usage or authority.

impiety

impiety to the passage: "For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law." This omission is the more remarkable, as in the counterpart of the same verse the article is properly restored: "And as many as have sinned in THE law, shall be judged by THE law:" that is, the law of Moses.

Your Lordship's authority has greatly contributed towards restoring the conjunctive mood to its original place, after the hypothetical particles *if, though, unless, except, &c.* and, considering how little variety of termination our verbs have, I would by no means dispossess it of its just claim. But those particles are not always hypothetical; and, therefore, to join them always with the subjunctive (as many writers, who wish to be thought more than commonly correct, affect to do) seems to be an impropriety. I would, with your Lordship, make this distinction. When the phrase is evidently conditional, expressing a doubt, or depending on a contingency, the subjunctive should ever be used: but when a concession, which is equivalent to an affirmation, is included in the sentence, I would uniformly use the indicative. If this observation be allowed to be just, it is plain that its application will be of great latitude.

There is nothing, I believe, in our language more undetermined than the use of the inseparable prepositions *in* and *un*. The former is evidently borrowed from the Latin; and, in many instances, re-  
tains



tains with us its Latin intensive signification: whereas the latter is of Saxon origin, and is always a privative. Since then we are possessed of a privative prefix of our own stock, and since it is perfectly sufficient for the purpose, it may be pertinently asked, why we should not exclusively employ it to denote privation; and confine the other to such words only, as being derived from the Roman tongue, still retain their intensive meaning in ours\*? It will be said, perhaps, that although this rule be established on principles of general analogy, it must necessarily be liable to many exceptions. When the prefix coalesces with a word of which the initial is an *l*, an *m*, a *p*, or an *r*, euphony has introduced the usage of changing the *n* of the preposition into one of those letters: now it would be extremely harsh and uncouth to read and write *ullegible*, *ummeasurable*, *urresistible*, &c. That such a pronunciation and orthography would, at first, appear harsh to the unaccustomed ear, and strange to the unaccustomed eye, I readily grant; yet there is, in reality, no more harshness nor oddity in *ullegible* than in *nullity*, in *ummeasurable* than in *mummary*, in *urremediable* than in *currency*. But there is no need for introducing this novel form; seeing we have already such a multitude of words in which the *n* retains its own shape and sound, in words beginning with the forementioned letters; without our perceiving any degree of cacophony or incongruity.

\* Examples: *infrigidate*, *infuscate*, *ingeminate*, *immerge*, &c. But this difference is better illustrated by contrast: *incarcerate* and *uncarcerate*; *inchain* and *unchain*; *infold* and *unfold*, &c.

For surely we may say and write *unlegible* as well as *unlearned*, *unlettered*, *unlibidinous*; *unmeasureable* as well as *unmerciful*; and *unremediable* as well as *unrebuked*. And was not Shakespeare's *unreconcilable* (Anth. and Cleop. Act v. Sc. 1.) more proper and as harmonious as our *irreconcilable*? I wish our professed grammarians would take this matter into consideration, and give us some consistent principles to be guided by.

I have observed a mode of phrasing, that now seems to prevail; which, nevertheless, I am apt to consider as a real solecism. It is to suppress the little word *it* in such sentences as the following: "Now that this of the two is the better gloss, *it* is proved by your own interrogation." So Chillingworth, and the writers of his time; but our moderns would, in imitation of the Latins, make the first part of the sentence the nominative to the verb; and write, "That this of the two is the better gloss, is proved, &c." Change only the order thus: "Now *it* is proved that, &c." and the necessity of retaining the *it* will be manifest.

Another still greater impropriety seems to be creeping in upon us, from our French neighbours; and is already found in writers of repute. It consists in beginning a sentence with an insulated nominative, which has no corresponding verb; as, "Born a poet, verses



"cost him nothing.—Irafcible beyond credibility, the fmallest con-  
 "tradiction put him in a paffion." I know not if there be any  
 thing more oppofite to the genius of our language than fuch a con-  
 ftruction\*.

Notwithftanding all that has been written by our moft recent  
 grammarians about *fhall* and *will*, *would* and *fhould*, it does not ap-  
 pear to me that there are yet any *criteria* eftablifhed to direct us in  
 the ufe of them. Your Lordfhip has juftly obferved that our an-  
 ceftors, even as late as the reigns of James and the Charleses, re-  
 fpectively employed them in a different manner from that of the  
 prefent time; and I cannot help thinking that the uſage of our an-  
 ceftors was, in fome regard, preferable to ours.

In diſjunctive ſentences, ſhould we uſe *or* or *nor* after *not* and *nei-  
 ther*? The nature of negatives ſeems to require *nor*; yet I have fre-  
 quently obſerved, even in thoſe writers who aſſume to themſelves  
 the peculiar province of correctors general of ſtile and grammar,  
 ſuch expreſſions as theſe: "*Neither* he *or* any one elſe.—*Neither* the  
 "one *or* the other of theſe aſſertions, &c." To me this appears un-  
 grammatical.

\* This cannot be called the *caſe abſolute*; becauſe the *ſubject* is the ſame in both  
 parts of the ſentence; and the *predicament* and the *ſubject* muſt neceſſarily be in the  
 ſame caſe.

One query still remains about the orthography of proper names. Our first translators of the Bible, Tindal and Coverdale, retained the old pronunciation of the proper names, such as they found it in the Greek and Latin versions, with little variation and few exceptions. Thus they wrote *Heva*, *Noe*, *Jared*, *Mathusala*, *Nemrod*, *Ninevé*, *Cades*, *Cades-Barné*, *Bersabé*, *Booz*, *Isai*, *Elizeus*, *Salomon*, *Aggeus*, *Oseas*. In some instances, they followed the French form; *Esaye*, *Jeremie*, *Zachary*, *Abdy*, *Sophony*, &c. Sometimes they adopted the Masoretic mode of pronunciation; as *Zoar*, *Serug*, *Terah*, *Peleg*, &c. A farther approximation to this last form was made in Cranmer's and Parker's Bibles; particularly in those names that were less known, and consequently less apt to strike or surprise the people by a new sound, while the more celebrated were retained in their old orthography. But the English refugees at Geneva, taking the French Calvinists for their model, scrupulously adhered to the Masoretic punctuation, in their expression of the proper names, and as much as possible to the literal sounds of the Hebrew alphabet, such as modern grammarians exhibit them. James's translators generally adopted their plan, but with many modifications, either to avoid cacophony, or not to deviate too widely from the sounds to which the people had been so long accustomed. They did not, therefore, write *Methusael*, *Sheth*, *Enosh*, *Shem*, *Izbak*, *Jaakob*, *Rebekah*, *Rabel*, *Nashshon*, &c. Yet, in general, they followed the Geneva plan, both in this and most other particulars; as may be seen by any one who shall take the trouble to compare them.

Since



Since that period little innovation has been attempted in the Hebrew names, except by Bate, with whom *Henoch* is *Henuc*, *Jared* *Oirad*, *Adah* *Odeh*, *Zillah* *Jilleh*, *Enos* *Anush*, *Chenaan* *Canon*, *Lot* *Luth*, *Zoar* or *Segor* *Juar*, *Ephron* *Oprun*, *Judah* *Jeudeh*, *Aaron* *Aorun*, *Zadok* *Jaduk*, *Bethel* *Bith-al*, &c. &c. Uncouth as this orthography may seem to be, it was, not without some specious reasons, adopted by Bate. He wished to express, as nearly as possible, what he took to be the genuine original powers of each Hebrew letter, despising not only the Masoretic pronunciation, but also that of the most ancient interpreters, who lived at a time when the Hebrew was yet a spoken language. Now he should have, in this respect, despised neither the one nor the other; but either have retained the proper names as he found them in the common version, or at least corrected them on better authority than his own capricious ideas.

Is it unexpedient then to make any change at all in the present orthography of the Hebrew proper names? I say not that; but I think the change should be natural, analogical, and founded on orthography, reason, or ancient authority. It were certainly to be wished that every name could be so written in a version, as to be distinguished even by its sound, and express, as nearly as possible, the powers of the Hebrew elements that compose it; and this has been more or less attempted by the most wary and cautious.

cautious translators. But then the names must not, even for this analogical discrimination, be so strangely metamorphosed, as not to be known again for the same. This indeed will rarely happen, if we do not give a new pronunciation to the vowel sounds; I mean the real vowels א. ה. ו. י. ע. and their several combinations. Of all these, as it is impossible to know precisely their various powers in the mouth of an ancient Jew, the best we can do is to sound them as they have been handed down to us, whether by the ancient interpreters or Jewish grammarians; no great matter which. Thus though אִיּוֹב would seem, if I pronounce each letter separate, to be expressed by Aiub (and so Bate would probably have written it) yet I will continue to call it Job, or at least Iob; because I find all the ancients so express it; and because in reality there is nothing uncommon in those letters taking that sound. In fact, if we pronounce *I* in Job as we do in *Iambicks*, we shall give it the very sound which the Italians give to *ai*; and if we pronounce the *o* as our *o* short, it will not differ from *u* short. Were our proper name *George* to be treated by an Oriental as we treat the Oriental names, and expressed in these letters גֵּוֹרְגָנָה, it would be so altered as not to retain a single sound of the original, excepting that of *r*.

I am therefore of opinion, that we should retain the old names with as little variation as possible. The only innovations I would propose are the following: The ך I would always express by *b*; the ך by *ch*; the ם by *c* or *k*; the ש by *sh*; the י by *z*; and the י by *ts*,

or



or *z* with a point above it. This would be sufficient to distinguish the similar consonant sounds. And as the *h* at the end of proper names ending with *h* is useless, I would only retain it to distinguish masculines from feminines, as *Judah* from *Debora*, &c.

Before I leave the subject of proper names, I must observe, that we are now so accustomed to place the definite article before those of rivers and mountains, that they look, somehow, naked without it. Yet this mode has not yet, I believe, been introduced into any English version; and it would, perhaps, be by some accounted a blameable innovation to write "The Euphrates, The Nile, The Jordan, The Chobar, The Lebanon, The Carmel, The Thabor, &c." Perhaps we should make a distinction. When the name mentioned is not attended with its appellative *river*, and is the nominative or objective of a verb, the article should be prefixed; but when *river* is immediately joined to it, or when it is in concord or regimen with another noun, the article should not be prefixed.

The orthography of a proper name being once fixed upon, it should be retained throughout the whole Bible, both in the Old and New Testament; although there may be a variety of lettering it in the originals. See Bishop Newcome's Preface to the Minor Prophets, p. xxxvi.

With

With regard to such expressions in the original Scriptures as, if translated literally, would offer to the mind of the delicate and pious reader offensive images; I make no doubt but your Lordship will agree with me, that they ought to be accommodated to our times and manners, and rendered with more freedom than any other passages. Exemplification here is unnecessary. But I should be glad to know, whether in this class your Lordship would include such phrases as the following, **יפתח את רחמיה, בא אליה, ידע אשתו, כל פטר רחם** &c.

These, my Lord, are a part of the principal doubts and difficulties that have occasionally presented themselves during the course of my present labours. I lay them before your Lordship with all that confidence which your former encouraging countenance so naturally inspires. If health and leisure shall allow you but to glance them over, I am persuaded that a great portion of the mist will be dissipated by so clear and keen a ray. I wish not to give your Lordship the trouble of writing long remarks. The shortest hint of approbation or the contrary; a single *yes* or *no* on the opposite page, relative to any query I have put, or opinion I have ventured to give, will be a sufficient indication of your sentiment, and go a great way to make me cherish or abandon my own. Before next Michaelmas I hope to have  
the



the honour of submitting to your perusal a whole volume of my translation. How happy shall I esteem myself, if it should have the good fortune to merit the same flattering approbation you were so kind as to express of my Prospectus. Whether that be in my fate, or not, I eagerly seize this opportunity of testifying to the Public, with what respect and veneration I have the honour to be,

MY LORD,

Your LORDSHIP's

Much obliged,

And most obedient,

Humble Servant,

A. G E D D E S.

LONDON,  
January 15, 1787.

L

POSTSCRIPT.

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THOMAS SCOTT

A. O. D. E. S.

POSTSCRIPT



## P O S T S C R I P T.

**E**VER ready to own and rectify my mistakes, to supply omissions, or to answer rational queries, I take this occasion to make the following additions to my PROSPECTUS which was lately published; and in which I am sorry to find more typographical and other errors, than, on too slight a reading over of the sheets as they came from the prefs, I had occasionally observed.

Page 2, line 5, after *agreed upon*, add what follows:

A late ingenious Essayist\* has, indeed, given it as his opinion, that a new translation of the Bible is not only unnecessary, but even dangerous, nay *extremely* dangerous; and that, instead of serving the cause of religion, it would tend to hurt it: and a more recent writer, of no common abilities, in the Monthly Review, has adopted and enforced the same sentiment. It may not therefore be improper to hear, and fairly appretiate, their arguments.

\* Knox's Essays, Vol. I. No. 49.

In the first place, the "venerable antiquity" of our present public version is urged as a reason sufficient for retaining it, with all its faults.—This, in the mouth of a Protestant, seems to be an odd sort of argument. If a Romanist had used it in favour of his *Vulgate*, he would be instantly told, "That no age nor prescription can authorize error; and that it is obstinacy to defend in any version, however ancient or venerable, what cannot be rationally defended." In fact, the lapse of thirteen centuries has given no more real value to the *Vulgate*, than it had when it first appeared; nor is our present public version more estimable now than it was an hundred and seventy-six years ago. If time could enhance the value of a translation, Tyndal's would be preferable to James's; for it can boast at least two hundred and fifty years, and a part of it two hundred and sixty. And old Wicliff might shake his hoary locks, and say, "I have a much better claim than either."

But it is further urged, "That independently of age, and the air of veneration which it has thence acquired, our present version ought to be retained for its intrinsic beauty and excellence. The language, though it is simple and natural, is rich and expressive. The poetical passages of Scripture are peculiarly pleasing. The translation of the Psalms abounds with passages exquisitely beautiful. Even where the sense is not very clear, nor the connection of ideas at first sight obvious, the mind is soothed, and the ear ravished, with the powerful yet unaffected charms of the style, &c."

Although this panegyric be somewhat *outré*, I am willing to subscribe to it. But all those beauties, in an equal degree, and some of them even in a greater degree, are found in our first versions, and must be more or less found in every version of the Hebrew scriptures that is not a mere paraphrase. The great merit of James's translators did not certainly consist in beautifying, or meliorating the style of the former versions, but in correcting their errors, and making a version more strictly conformable to the letter, not always the spirit, of their supposed indefectible originals. Their fidelity



fidelity and accuracy deserve great commendation; and that is almost all they have a just claim to. The style they found in their prototype; and the diction and phraseology they borrowed from their predecessors in translation: and it was well that they had such models; for their own preface evinces that their taste was none of the best. We have indeed some difficulty to believe that it could be written by the same persons.

What is *beautiful*, what is *excellent*, what is *melodious* and *ravishing* in the present version, should be undoubtedly retained by all future translators; but is there any reason for retaining its corruptions, its mis-translations, its obscurities, and its other acknowledged imperfections? I scarcely think that its most partial admirer will contend for this. The judgment made by Mr. Knox, from a comparison of a late version of Isaiah with that of the public translation, is not altogether just. He should have considered, that the intention of the learned Prelate, in giving that version, was to exhibit a specimen of Hebrew metre, clothed in a corresponding English dress, and representing as nearly as possible the measure, the construction, the air, and complexion of the original. From this, and from the novel and awkward appearance of so many unequal and unmeasured English lines, and the many unnatural breaks and unexpected pauses that thence ensue, it frequently happens, I confess, that the old translation is more pleasant to read; the order and arrangement, too, appear often to be more harmonious; and sometimes, though rarely, the terms seem more properly chosen. But how fully is all this compensated by the clearness, precision, and energy of the Bishop's version, and the many corrections of a faulty or mis-translated text? Let this version be taken out of its present form, and divided and arranged like plain poetical prose; and the least intelligent reader will, I think, be struck with the difference.

But the most specious objection is derived from the danger of scandalizing the Christian people, and weakening their faith, by presenting them with

with a new or improved version of the Scriptures. " We have received the " Bible" (says the same amiable writer) " in the very words in which it now " stands, from our fathers; we have learned many passages of it by heart " in our infancy; we find it quoted in sermons from the earliest to the " latest times, so that its phrase is become familiar to our ear, and we " cease to be startled at apparent difficulties. Let all this be called pre- " judice, but it is a prejudice which universally prevails in the middle " and lower ranks; and we should hardly recognize the Bible, were it to " be read in our churches in any other words than those which our fathers " have heard before us." — Again, " If the lessons of the Church were " to be read in different words from those which they have heard from " their infancy, their faith might be more endangered than by all the argu- " ments of the Deists."

This is an old objection\*; it was made by St. Augustine to St. Jerom. The people of that day, who had received from their fathers the Bible in the words of the old Italic translation, were astonished, and some of them scandalized, on hearing the new version read in the churches; and a certain African Bishop raised a tumult in his congregation, by substituting *be-dera* for *cucurbita* in the fourth chapter of Jonah.

Whether any of our good people would be as zealous for the word *gourd*, experience only can decide: but if such ill-founded prejudices really exist among them, it is the fault of their teachers; and their teachers should seriously labour to remove them. The people should be taught (for they are not indocil) that it is to the meaning, and not the words, of Scripture—to the sense, not the sound, that they ought to attend—That a

\* It is worth remarking, that objections of the same nature have been made against translating the Scriptures at all. " A number of pious but weak Christians will be scandalized, " will have their faith shaken, will be perverted to heresy; therefore let the Scriptures re- " main locked up from them, to prevent these evils."



translation of the Bible, like all other translations, is susceptible of further and further improvement—That the languages in which the Scriptures were originally written, are now better understood than when the last translation was made—That the originals themselves have, by the diligence and labours of the learned, been restored more nearly to their first integrity—and that, by these means, a number of difficult passages may be illustrated, obscurities removed, objections obviated; and the Divine oracles made more intelligible to every capacity. All this the people have a right to know; and, knowing all this, they will not only be not averse to a new translation, but expect it with eagerness, and receive it with pleasure; with a pleasure proportioned to their zeal and devotion. For as to that class of devotees, if such there be, who believe that our present version was written with the finger of the Almighty; and that to alter a tittle of it, is to be guilty of blasphemy, it would be worse than weak to encourage their prejudices; it would be to abet a real blasphemy, for fear of incurring, in their extravagant ideas, the imputation of an imaginary one.

The truth is, as far as I have been able to learn, that the people in general are sufficiently sensible of the expediency of a new version, or a thorough revival of the old one. There are few, even of the lowest class, who have not heard of the imperfections of the public version; our preachers are constantly correcting particular passages in it. Bible-histories and Family-expositors, without number, are dispersed all over the kingdom, in which many mis-translations are corrected, or pretended to be so; and yet the people read them with avidity, and even with enthusiasm. In short, the prejudices of the people against an improved version either do not exist at all, or are such as may be easily removed, or deserve not to be regarded\*. Indeed if the above objections had come from writers less respectable, I should have paid no attention to them.

Taking

\* That the prejudices of the people are not so strong as Mr. Knox seems to think, and that they are not so easily scandalized on hearing the Scriptures read in words different from the

Taking it for granted, then, that a new, or at least an improved version of the Scriptures is wanting, and wanted; it is my intention, in this Prospectus, to explore, &c.

Page 5. l. last, *inculcate to*; I am not sure but it should be *inculcate on*.

Page 8. l. 15. The word *unclinch* has been objected to as inelegant, I fear it is also improper; perhaps *undo* might be substituted.—In the note of the same page, for *aversion*, read *an aversion*.

Page 10. l. 16. for *last*, read *latter*.

Page 13. l. 26. for *exculpating them of*, read *exculpating them from*.

Page 16. l. 20. for *is*, read *be*.

Page 18. l. 20. for *that they could*, read *if they could*.

Page 20. reform the note thus—Three volumes of this work are now (1786) published. The first, beside a sensible preface, Canons, and *Clavis* or catalogue of the MSS. used by the author, contains various readings on Genesis, Exodus, and Leviticus—the second carries them to the end of Kings—the third contains the Prophets and Megilloth—and the fourth, which is now in the press, will contain the rest. It were to be wished that De Rossi had been less sparing of his various lections; for he has only given those which he deemed of importance: whereas we want to know the real state of his MSS. and thence to judge for ourselves what readings are important, what not.

the present translation, we have a daily and flagrant proof before our eyes; and that too with respect to a part of Scripture that is more frequently read and repeated than any other. The words, and even the style of the Psalms, in the book of Common Prayer, are more different from those in the Bible, than they can well be in any improved translation; nay, the very Decalogue itself is expressed in different terms; and yet I never heard that any one was scandalized at this difference, or in either did not recognize the Bible. The Bible must be sadly travestied indeed, in a translation, before it cease to be recognizable.

Page



Page 29. for *Hexapla*, read *Polypla*.

Page 32. l. 22. read *septuaginta*.

Page 34. last line, for *minor poets*, read *minor prophets*.

Page 35. I have too rashly adopted the general prejudice, that the editors of the Complutensian Polyglott did not, in their edition of the Septuagint, adhere to their MSS. I am at present of a different opinion; which, I trust, I shall be able to establish on the strongest intrinsic evidence.

Page 37. l. 13. after *small octavo*, add, and lastly at Leipzick, by Reineccius, in 1757, on a small but elegant type, in 8vo.; with select various readings from the Alexandrian copy.

Page 40. l. 10. after *completed*, add, It is hoped the learned editor will be requested and encouraged to give the rest of this ancient MS. in the same form.—*Ibid.* in the next note, Borgia is called by mistake *prefect of the propaganda*; it should be *secretary*.

Page 44. l. 21. for *Dominican friars*, read *Augustinian friars*.

Page 48. l. 10. for *paraphrase*, read *the loosest paraphrase*; and add, in a note—As an example of this, take Gen. xlvii. 26. *Ex eo tempore usque in presentem diem, in universa terra Egypti, regibus quinta pars solvitur; et factum est quasi in legem; absque terra sacerdotali, quæ libera ab hac conditione fuit.* Compare this with the original.

Page 57. l. 19. add, Indeed such emendations are, strictly speaking, more than conjecture. They arise from a sort of intrinsic evidence, of the negative kind at least, which often is sufficient to exclude all sort of doubt, and almost always to force a rational assent.

Page 61. I had ventured to use the word *vocable*. Some have approved of it, as a term we wanted; others have objected to it, as an innovation.

Page 75. l. 1. for *was*, read *is*; and page 79. line last, read—was republished at Leipfick, with the Hebrew text, in two volumes in quarto, in 1740.

Page 82. l. 15. for *we are*, read *I am*.

Page 94. l. 4. after *text*, add, A striking example occurs, Exod. xxxii. 18, where there are no less than eleven words in Italics, which not only give no force to the passage, but present a false idea; for who would not think, on reading it, that the words *shout, cry, sing*, corresponded to so many plural participles, and were equivalent to *shouters, criers, singers*? See the place, and compare it with the original.

Page 98. l. 5. I have used the word *forces* in a meaning hardly admissible in English; read therefore *strength* or *abilities*.

Page 99. l. 2. Add, Mr. Dawson has since published the sixth and eleven following chapters of Genesis, on the same plan.

Page 100. l. 9. after *merit*, add, Particularly an anonymous one, printed for Millar in 1751; and that of Dr. Hodgson, just now published. *Ibid.* in the note, add, and the last number (No. IV.) contains more good remarks on particular passages, from Genesis to the Proverbs inclusively, than any work of the same size in our language.

Page 102. l. 3. "The synod of Thoulouse is called a diocesan synod:" this is an oversight; it was certainly a provincial synod: and the following is the odious constitution alluded to: *Prohibemus etiam, ne libros Veteris Testamenti aut Novi Laici permittantur habere: nisi fortè Psalterium vel Breviarium pro divinis officiis, aut Horas B. Mariæ aliquis ex devotione habere*



*habere velit; sed ne præmissos libros habeant in vulgari translatos, artiffimè inhibemus.* Concil. Tholosan. cap. xiv.—It is worth remarking, that this same Council seem to have been the first authors of a religious Inquisition. See *Capitula*, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, &c. apud Labbe, tom. xi. p. 427.

Page 109. l. last, add, Wicliff's translation of the New Testament was published by Lewis, in folio, in 1731. His press-copy was collated with ten MSS. the principal various readings of which are marked in the margin. Beside the manuscripts of Wicliff's version, at Cambridge, Oxford, and in the British Museum, there is a beautiful copy of the New Testament in the Advocates Library at Edinburgh; and one of the seven Catholic Epistles in the University Library of Glasgow.

Page 113. l. 13. Reform the whole passage thus: The Abbé du Contant de la Molette has, since the year 1777, published the following works on the Holy Scripture: *La Genèse Expliqué*, 3 vol. 12mo. *L'Exode Expliqué*, 3 vol. *Le Levitique Expliqué*, 2 vol. *Les Pseaumes Expliqués*, 3 vol. In all which works, though he has retained Calmet's version made from the Vulgate, he is continually correcting it either by the Hebrew text, or by the other ancient versions; and so far his work may be accounted a translation from the originals. The Journal des Sçavans of last year announces two new French versions of the Psalms; one in eight vol. 12mo. by Berthier, the other in two vol. by Bauduer, both said to be estimable works; and of which the latter is immediately made from the Hebrew.

Page 125. l. 24. in the note, efface *Durell*; he should not have been placed in such company.

Page 128. l. 28. read *energetic*.

These are the most important corrections and alterations that now it occurs to make. There are many other little inaccuracies of less note; particularly in the orthography of proper names, which the printer has strangely meta-

morphosed, but which the learned reader is requested to correct thus: *Amama, Doederlein, Onseel, Maldenbauer, Villoison, Meninski, Semler, Bjornsthal, &c.*

I have now only to return my hearty thanks to those gentlemen, who, since the publication of my Prospectus, have favoured me with their friendly advice and assistance in the prosecution of my arduous undertaking; and to answer such queries as have been made to me by anonymous correspondents, to whom I knew not how, otherwise, to direct an answer.

To Sir William Jones, of Ramsgate, Bart. I am indebted for the early communication of a manuscript commentary on the whole Bible; in which, although there be not much criticism, there is a great deal of good sense, and many pertinent reflections.

Mr. Bradley, of Oxford, beside several excellent remarks on particular passages of Scripture, has favoured me with a complete version of Jeremiah; of which he will see, in due time, that I have profited.

Mr. Winstanley, and Mr. Croft, of the same place, will permit me to acknowledge my respective obligations to them.

Mr. Dimock, of Gloucester, has sent me his very judicious observations on a great part of the Bible; accompanied with such expressions of friendship as I can never forget.

To the politeness of Colonel Vallancey I owe some curious observations, and the discovery of a valuable fragment of the Greek version of Isaiah, kept in the library of the University of Dublin.

From some other gentlemen, who have not chosen to let themselves be known, I have received some useful hints which shall be duly attended to.

The



The plan of a Commentary, suggested by *Erasmus*, from Dublin, would be an excellent one for a professed commentator ; as far as a mere translator is concerned, he will find that I have followed it.

*T. R.* and a *Protestant Divine* (whom I have since found to be a respectable clergyman of the church of Scotland) seem surpris'd at the liberality of sentiment that pervades my *Prospectus* ; but still have their suspicions, that a professed Catholic cannot be an impartial translator of the Scriptures. At this I am not astonish'd. I know many Catholics, who entertain suspicions equally unfavourable with regard to Protestants : and perhaps there are few, on either side, who are entirely divested of such prejudices. I have professed no more, in that respect, than what, I trust, I shall be able to perform ; only let not my cause be prejudg'd.

Another gentleman, who assumes the name of *Origen*, is afraid that I am about to sacrifice the interests of Mother Church, by exposing the faults of a version which she holds in such high estimation, and which the Council of Trent has declared to be authentic Scripture. To this I answer, that as I will by no means affect to conceal the faults of the *Vulgate*, so neither will I affect to expose them. I will give the best translation I can of what I take to be the most genuine copy of the originals, without minding how much it may differ from any version whatsoever. If this, and what I have said in my *Prospectus*, p. 104, be not sufficient to allay *Origen's* fears, I must leave them to be dispell'd by time and reconsideration.

To the writer of a card, recommending the perusal of Wakefield's *Enquiry*, I have to say, that I have carefully perused it ; and that the pleasure I received from that perusal would have been much greater, if the author had enforced his favourite system with less violence.

From several persons I have received advices about the œconomy of my work. One counsels me to make my version as strictly literal as possible; another, to make it perfectly free. The former says I should retain all the Hebraisms, however uncouth and obscure they may seem; the latter is for retaining not one of them. It would be impossible for me to follow both these counsels, and therefore I shall follow neither.

A Northumberland correspondent hopes I will not omit to insert Canne's marginal references. This I can by no means comply with: a great number of Canne's references are chimerical, and serve only to crowd the page, and bewilder the reader. But I will insert such references, as I think real and useful ones; and consequently retain the greater part of those that are in the margins of the best editions of our present public version.

I am asked by *Philobiblos*, if I mean not to give a small edition without the critical notes, for the use of those who may not be able to purchase the large one? Alas! I know not yet what encouragement I may have to give ONE edition. When I shall have published my *Proposals* (which will be next winter) and seen how they are relished, it will then be time enough to think of extending my plan.

The Critical Reviewers (Jan. 1787) may indeed "rest secure," that as little deviation as possible will be made from the language of the present version; to which, in fact, my translation, at every new touch, more and more approximates.

In setting about to transcribe my MS. for the press, I find some difficulty in fixing upon the most proper distribution of the page; and should be glad to have the opinion of the learned on that head. For example, should the various readings and renderings be separated from the explanatory



tory notes, or mixed with them in the order in which they occur? Should either, or both, be printed in columns? Should every note begin a new line for the sake of distinction; or be separated only by a dash for the sake of sparing paper?

Some of my learned friends are for having the explanatory notes only at the bottom of the page; and for throwing all the rest among the critical remarks; leaving only in the text the respective symbols of addition, subtraction, correction, or variation. This would certainly save me a great deal of labour; but would not, I fear, be so satisfactory to the reader. When we see a referential mark in the text of a work, we are glad to find the reference as readily as possible; and naturally look for it on the same page. I am therefore apt to think, that most readers will be pleased with a distribution that spares them the trouble of constantly turning to the end of a volume, to seek in a large field of critical discussion, what they wish to see at one glance.

Few are capable of weighing the motives and examining the foundations on which a correction of the present text has been made; or why such a reading has been preferred by the translator to such another reading: but almost all are capable of understanding, and have a right to know, that such a correction, and such a reading, are made on such and such authorities.

Such, at least, is the light I view things in; by putting myself in the situation of those who are not acquainted with the learned languages; but who yet make a serious study of the Scriptures, and are desirous of knowing the real state in which they have been handed down to us.

Let me, once more, intreat those gentlemen who have by them any remarks on particular passages (which they mean not, themselves, to publish) to be so kind as to communicate them. They shall be thankfully received, and fairly acknowledged.

F I N I S.

any notice, or which with them in the ordinary course of business, should be printed in columns, should every note begin a new line for the sake of distinction; or be separated only by a dash for the sake of saving space.

Some of my learned friends are for having the explanatory notes only at the bottom of the page; and for allowing all the rest to be the chief matter; leaving only in the text the respective symbols of addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division. I think would certainly have me a great deal of labour; but would not, I think be so satisfactory to the reader. When we look at a text in the text of a work, we are glad to find the reference as readily as possible; and naturally look for it on the same page. I am therefore apt to think, that most readers will be pleased with a division of that part of the text, the symbols of addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division, as they wish to see at one glance.

Now the capable of well, in a more and extending the foundation on which a correction of the present text has been made, or why this reading has been preferred by the translator to such another reading, but almost all are capable of understanding, and have a right to know, that such a correction, and such a reading, are made on such and such a basis.

Such, as I say, is the first I view things in; by giving myself in the situation of those who are not acquainted with the learned languages; but who yet make a lesson of the language, and are desirous of knowing the real state in which it has been handed down to us.

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I am, once more, to thank these gentlemen who have by their very remarks on particular passages (which they mean not themselves, to give) to be so kind as to communicate them. They shall be cheerfully received, and fully acknowledged.